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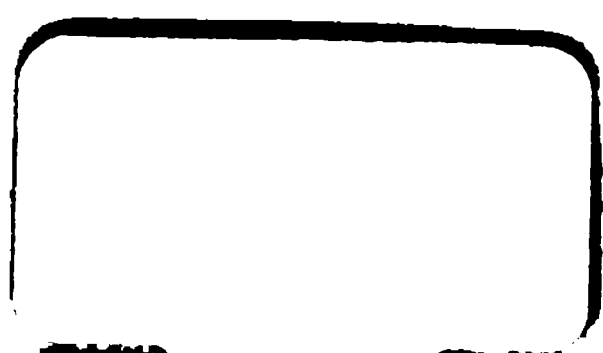
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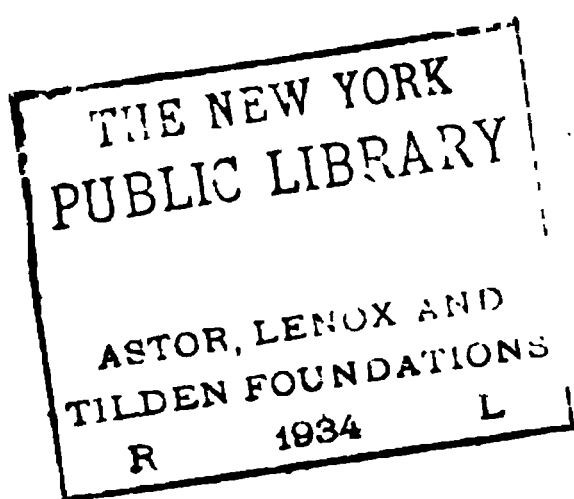


THE COASTS OF DEVON

AND

LUNDY ISLAND







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*THE*  
**COASTS OF DEVON**  
*AND*  
**LUNDY ISLAND**

**THEIR TOWNS, VILLAGES, SCENERY, ANTIQUITIES  
AND LEGENDS**

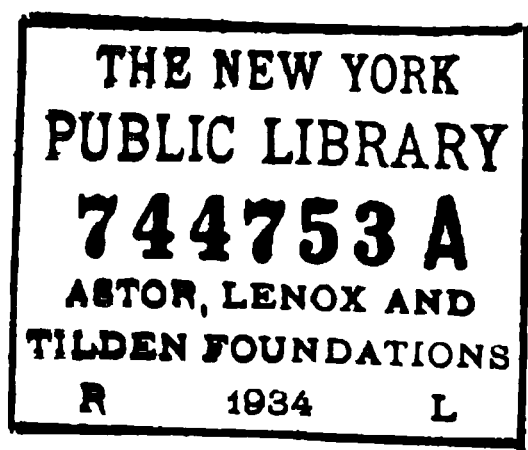
**BY**  
**JOHN LLOYD WARDEN PAGE**

**AUTHOR OF**  
**'AN EXPLORATION OF DARTMOOR AND ITS ANTIQUITIES,' 'AN EXPLORATION**  
**OF EXMOOR AND THE HILL COUNTRY OF WEST SOMERSET,' 'THE**  
**RIVERS OF DEVON, FROM SOURCE TO SEA,' 'OKEHAMPTON:**  
**ITS CASTLE,' ETC., ETC.**

***WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS***

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E.C.

## Dedication

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TO MY FELLOW TRAMPS  
AT DIFFERENT PERIODS OF THESE WANDERINGS,

C. M. H.,

T. F. P.,

W. L. C.,

AND

A. P.,

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME.

*Aut. 12.20.18 May 1920*



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## PREFACE.

ONCE upon a time—as the story books say—it was the custom for the author to preface his work with an apology. Some authors, indeed, it is whispered, cleave to the custom still. Perhaps they derive a certain occult satisfaction from this indulgence in a “pride that apes humility.” I am afraid that *I* do not, and, good or bad, offer the world no apology for the “Coasts of Devon.”

It is not a guide book. The reader will not find a list of the most desirable hotels; there are no statistics about population; and he must seek elsewhere for information anent the arrival and departure of the mail. This work pretends to none of these things. It is only a guide book in that it is an account of scenes and places along the Devonshire seaboard, the result of a walk, or rather of a series of walks, over the cliffs of the fairest county in the west.

Although no excuse is made for its appearance, it would be arrogating too much to say that such a work is “wanted.” There are other books on this “foam-laced margin of the western sea,” besides the guide books—books which tell the traveller all sorts of facts which it becometh him to know. But, speaking personally, when I take my walks abroad I like a little more than bare information—the

age of a certain church, the height of a certain hill, the birth, parentage, and education of some half-forgotten "worthy." I like a little talk about the scenery, the people, the surroundings, and this I do not, as a rule, find. As a consequence I rise from the perusal of most of these books, well—*hungry*. So, of these Coasts of Devon I have tried to write in a manner less cut-and-dried than that adopted by too many books on matters topographical—to add to the ordinary dish a little condiment as it were. If this condiment, such as it is, make the meal palatable, I am satisfied. My "true intent is all for your delight."

While on the subject of works of a kindred nature, let me not forget to acknowledge my indebtedness to brother authors. No "tramp" can go far afoot without his "Murray," or his "Ward," and to the excellent "Hand-book" of the one, and the "Thorough Guides" of the other, I owe not a little. Something, too, has been gleaned from Walter White's "Walk from London to the Land's End," and from Mackenzie Walcott's "Guide to the Coasts of Devon and Cornwall," while the historical part of the chapters relating to Lundy Island is derived in great measure from the late Mr J. R. Chanter's interesting "Monograph." One or two other works, chiefly of archæological and other learned societies, have been laid under contribution. An acknowledgment has, I trust, been made in the footnotes; if any such has been omitted, I crave forgiveness.

It may be asked what is the best time for a walk over these Devonshire cliffs. So far as the scenery goes, I think late spring. The cliffs—of North Devon especially—are never so beautiful as when seen through the tender green of May foliage. But in Devonshire we have to



consider another thing, and that is *weather*. And May, as a rule, is not a fine month. From a weather point of view then, experience has taught me that the best time is during the last week in March and the first in April. The ground is then hard and dry, the air fresh and invigorating, and free from that soft languorous feeling that so often accompanies the approach of summer. Fine weather, too, usually prevails throughout the greater part of September, when the woods have turned from green to gold, and the cliffs look almost as well as when in the garb of spring. But in September the tourist is abroad, the "season" is in full swing at the watering places; and some of us do not care for tourists—even when as "guileless" as he of the *Saturday Review*, and find *res angusta domi* less elastic than the season's prices.

It would be ungrateful of me to conclude these remarks without thanking "all whom it may concern" for the favour they have accorded my former efforts. May I hope that the present volume will not prove less interesting than "Dartmoor," "Exmoor," and "The Rivers of Devon." To me its compilation has been a labour of love. If the reading give as much pleasure as the writing I am more than content.

JOHN LL. WARDEN PAGE.



§

# THE COASTS OF DEVON

AND

## LUNDY ISLAND.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

Coast Scenery—The North Coast—The South Coast—Climate—Geology—  
River Estuaries—Harbours and Seaports—Fishing Stations—Watering  
Places—Historical Associations.

“AMIDST all our English counties Devonshire stands unrivalled for the exquisite loveliness of its scenery.” So writes the author of “The Fern Paradise”—a man who, in the pursuit of his delightful hobby, has probably seen as much of Devonshire as any one of its inhabitants, and whose opinion, therefore, is entitled to respect. But what constitutes this loveliness? It is, he says, *contrast*. And nowhere is this contrast more marked than in the coast line “now frowning with barren but lofty grandeur at the waves, now clothed from the highest point of the cliff to the waters’ edge with one deep dark mass of vegetation.” But whether of dark and rugged slate, as on the north coast, or of the rich sandstone that stretches mile after mile along the shore of the English Channel, there is no monotony. “For the grand rocks sink at intervals to give place to magnificent bays which sweep gracefully from cliff’s point to cliff’s point, and help to fling over the coast scenery of this the most beautiful of English counties the same aspect of variety which is its most charming characteristic.”

Although these bays are a feature of the south rather than of the north coast, their comparative absence from the scenery that borders the shore of the Severn Sea in no wise detracts from the variety of the coast line. For, if you take the whole extent from Glenthorne to Marsland Mouth on the border of Cornwall, no two miles are alike. At one point rises a headland seven hundred feet above the sea; from it you descend to a sheltered cove to which the shore falls gently. This is followed by a line of cliffs, rugged, worn, and hollowed by the ceaseless gnawing of the waves, perhaps two hundred feet high, and the cliffs will end in a low peninsula shutting in an inlet that runs up to green pastures watered by a trout stream, or dropping to another cove, overshadowed by some majestic precipice falling nearly sheer to the surf that seldom ceases to break over the black rocks at its base. And so the coast trends away westward—here a rock-bound cove, here a towering cliff, not always, nor indeed often, perpendicular, but sloping at a steep angle half-way to the water, covered with short turf or bramble, gorse, and bracken.

The barrier that looks down upon the English Channel is different. There is less of stern grandeur, more of bright colour, more of vegetation. It would seem as though the southern sun had left some of its warmth in the glowing cliffs of Teignmouth and Dawlish and Sidmouth, in the pink-tinted limestone of Berry Head, in the crags of Anstis Cove. There is a richer green in the grass—perhaps caused by the contrast between green and red—a more abundant growth in the plant life. Here trees and bushes spring in every combe, growing sometimes to the very edge of the tide. Often to the colder and more exposed glens of the north these are denied; the trees either cluster about the head far in from the sea, or are scrubby and ill-conditioned, with heads turned back inland and bodies aslant to the fury of the gales that come roaring in from the Atlantic.

And yet there is not so much difference between the climate of North and South Devon as one might expect. People are apt to imagine that because a place is on the north coast it must be far colder than one on the south. To many—nay, to most—the very name *North* Devon sounds chilly, while Torquay and Sidmouth are synonymous with warmth and a climate almost Italian. Yet Ilfracombe has much the same temperature as Torquay, with the advantage of being cooler in summer, while Westward Ho is said to be nearly as warm and far less enervating than Sidmouth. Yet Sidmouth enjoys something which no other Devonshire town enjoys in equal measure—a comparative immunity from rain. It is the driest place in Devonshire.

The contrast in scenery between the northern and southern coasts is due to the difference in geological formation. No part of the English seaboard is more interesting to the men of Jermyn-street than this Devonshire coast line. In popular language, and dispensing for the time with terms scientific, the northern coast is of dark slate rock, worn and weathered into wild inlets and fissures, and, as I have already shown, of most rugged and uneven outline. Of this, about one half, extending from West Somerset to Barnstaple Bay, may be classified under the name given it—because of its prevalence in the county itself—the Devonian series; while the other half, reaching to the borders of Cornwall, belongs to the Culm measures. In South Devon the Devonian rocks run from near the mouth of the Yealm to the neighbourhood of Berry Head, and the scenery of this part of the coast naturally bears some resemblance to that of the north. But from Torbay, with its limestones, we soon reach a formation very different. Right away into Dorsetshire stretch cliffs of red and yellow sandstone—cliffs of an outline much less broken, of height far less variable, and without that foreshore of jagged rock that makes the coast about Hartland and Mortehoe and the

Start so terrible to the mariner. Indeed, these south-eastern shores of Devon, unswept by Atlantic storms, wear an aspect of repose to which the stern barriers of the north, north-west, and south-west are strangers.

Another feature which adds to the variety of the Devonshire seaboard is found in the rivers. No less than thirteen fall into the sea at different spots along the coast line. Of these, by far the greater number flow into the English Channel—indeed, North Devon can claim but three of them—and one of these (the Lyn) is a mere torrent, though one of the most beautiful streams in the county. Now, most of these rivers have estuaries, and, as all these estuaries are more or less wooded, the change in scenery from barren cliff to wooded hill or slope is all the more delightful.

Just where the valley breaks its gyves  
The river cheers another scene—  
A land of orchards and of hives,  
And glebes of more than wonted green.\*

And you come upon them so suddenly, too. As a rule, nothing hints at the presence of a river except, perhaps, a deeper fold in the undulations. You turn a corner, as it were, and lo! there is a flood of clear green water, generally off Dartmoor, whose misty tors you will so often see against the northern sky, "coming," in the words of an old chronicler, "coming slowly, and, as it were, tired, to meet the sea."

At or near the mouths of these rivers are the great harbours. Chiefest, of course, is Plymouth, one of the finest in the world, protected, as it is, by the long line of the Breakwater. Next in importance comes Dartmouth, a haven perfectly land-locked, where, though the harbour is the estuary of a small river, the water is always deep. Plymouth, as all the world knows, is a great naval seaport—though, even in commerce, it is the first town in Devonshire;

\* E. G. ALDRIDGE ("The Two Edens").

Dartmouth is more of a pleasure resort, being one of the most important quarters of the yachting fraternity. The narrow estuary, flanked by steep hills three or four hundred feet high, with picturesque Dartmouth climbing one slope and Kingswear the other, is one of the loveliest havens in England.

The other seaports on the southern coast are Teignmouth, Exmouth—from which most of the vessels pass through the canal across the river to Exeter—Torquay (an artificial harbour), and Salcombe, which has a beautiful natural harbour within the mouth of a winding estuary known as Salcombe river. And there is of course the great fishing port of Brixham, known throughout the kingdom for its trawlers.

In North Devon the leading port is Bideford, under which is Appledore, nearer the mouth of the river, where there is a brisk shipbuilding and ship-repairing trade. But Bideford can hardly be called a harbour in the same sense as Plymouth or Dartmouth, for not only is it a good four miles from the sea on the left bank of the Torridge, but the approach is over a bar of sand which is sometimes a very nasty place indeed. Barnstaple, too, is a port and not a harbour, for it lies even further inland on the shallow Taw, a river which unites with the Torridge a mile from the sea. These sister ports do a considerable coasting trade—Bideford in days of old was famous, but its glory has now departed, and no vessel of any size comes higher than Appledore. Last comes the little harbour of Ilfracombe, overhung with wooded cliffs and sheltering a fair number of small craft, which are not so much an index of its trade as of the fact that it is a pilot-boat station and the only real harbour of refuge between Portishead and Lundy. I have seen a dozen small steamers packed into it at once, driven back from “down along” by a westerly gale, and twenty or thirty sailing vessels, and there have been times when you could walk from one side of the harbour to another on the vessels’ decks.

Next to Brixham, the fishing stations are Plymouth, Beer, and Clovelly, the latter a romantic village in North Devon, its whitewashed cottages clinging to the hillside very much after the fashion of a cluster of bees. These are the headquarters, though every port and estuary has its fishing boats, and very picturesque they look returning in a long line with the rising sun reddening the rich tan of their sails.

The mild climate of Devonshire has caused health resorts to spring into existence all along its coasts. At the head stands Torquay, which, although far from the oldest, has a population nearly equal to that of all the others put together. Then there is Paignton, close by, with a famous bathing beach, and, on the other side, Teignmouth, Dawlish, Exmouth, Budleigh Salterton, and Sidmouth—the oldest, and at one time the most aristocratic, seaside resort in Devonshire. And in the extreme east is Seaton. These are the principal watering places in the South, though perhaps Salcombe will consider itself equal at any rate to Seaton, and, latterly, Torcross has put in a claim to notice. Torcross is a village between Start Point and Dartmouth, on the fine open shore of Start Bay, at one end of the long fresh-water lake of Slapton Lea, which is only separated from the salt water by a bank of shingle. But Torcross is hardly a watering place—yet.

In North Devon Ilfracombe easily takes the palm, and its situation, amid some of the wildest and most romantic scenery in the West will always give it a position to which other towns may lay claim in vain. Still lovelier is Lynmouth, at the mouth of the wooded gorge of the Lyn. As for Westward Ho, it is healthy and has good golf links, and that is all that can be said for it. It is mighty dull; and were it not for its position, close to the best scenery in Devonshire—and the golf links aforesaid—would, I take it, have few visitors. It lies on the western shore of Barnstaple Bay, while a few miles eastward, the other side of Baggy



Point—ugly name for a fine headland—is another embryo health resort called Woolacombe, which, though at present but a terrace or two, bids fair some day to become greater, having that rarity in North Devon—a magnificent sweep of sands.

The historical associations of the Devonshire coast cluster for the most part about the ports of Plymouth and Dartmouth and beautiful Torbay. Of very early days, when it was peopled by tribes of Celts—who held their own long after the districts further east had submitted to Saxon rule—we know but little, though the clans inhabiting the northern parts of the county appear to have been of different race to those of South Devon.\* Here and there the cliffs are crowned with earthworks, dating doubtless from the day when this land was known as *Dyvneint*, or the Deep Valleys—the origin of the present name of Devon. But what manner of men threw them up, what battles were waged about them, is matter for surmise—a surmise that is never likely now to be reduced to certainty. We only know that Damnonia, the Latinised name not only of Devonshire, but of all the district west of the Axe, perhaps of the Avon, was, when the Saxons arrived, a great and powerful kingdom. Even in 705, nearly a hundred years after Cenwealh had driven the Britons beyond the Parret, St. Aldhelm addressed their King Geraint as “the most glorious King of Damnonia.” It was not until the reign of Athelstan that the Tamar became their eastern boundary. But the Celtic blood lingered, and lingers still to this day. “The Celtic element can be traced from the Axe, the last heathen frontier, to the extremities of Cornwall, of course increasing in amount as we reach the lands which were more recently conquered, and therefore less perfectly Teutonised. Devonshire is less Celtic than Corn-

\* “The Early History and Aborigines of North Devon,” by J. R. Chanter. (Trans. Dev. Assoc., ii., p. 57.)

wall, and Somersetshire is less Celtic than Devonshire, but not one of the three counties can be called a pure Teutonic land like Kent or Norfolk." Thus Professor Freeman.\*

The coasts of Devon—for it is with the coasts, and not with the interior, that we have to do—show even less signs of Roman occupation than of British. A Roman villa near Seaton, the head of a Roman standard at Sidmouth, a coin here, a weapon there, are almost the only traces of the rule of Imperial Rome. Probably the Romans had enough to do without hunting the natives from their wild fastnesses in this remote corner of Britain. At all events, there is little trace of them west of Exeter, though they may have had stations at Totnes and King's Tamerton, near Plymouth. Neither of these places, however, are on the coast. Whether "Ad Axium" was Axmouth, and where was the site of "Moxidunum," has never been satisfactorily settled.

But our seaboard had enough and to spare of the Danes. In fact it is said that Devonshire was the first county to suffer from their inroads. Scarcely an estuary or seaport—so far as there were seaports in those days—between Countisbury and Hartland, between Plymouth and Lyme, that they did not visit, and, except at Wembury near Plymouth, and at Appledore, they seem generally to have, in the language of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "wrought much evil by burning and man slaying," and to have "taken much booty with them to their ships." Ilfracombe, Teignmouth, Exmouth, Seaton, all suffered from the "heathen men," and probably many a place beside, of which the chronicler had never even heard the name.

With the Norman invasion our coast had no concern whatever. In his march westward, William passed through the centre of the county, and it may be questioned whether the dwellers on the coasts knew much about him, or had

\* "Norman Conquest."

more than the vaguest of notions that fifteen months before a battle had been fought that placed their Saxon conquerors beneath the heel of a conqueror stronger than they. Possibly if they had they would have cared little, for Devon was still more British than English, and William showed little disposition to harry any but those who stood in his path.

Dartmouth was the first place to come to the fore. It was a rendezvous for Cœur de Lion's Crusaders. Plymouth followed as the starting point for the Earl of Lancaster's expedition to Guienne in 1287. Both sent ships to the siege of Calais, and both were at feud with France for a couple of centuries at least. Twice the Black Prince is said to have landed at Plymouth on his return from France, and Dartmouth signalled herself by nearly annihilating a French force under Du Châstel when Henry the Fourth was king. From Dartmouth sailed "Kingmaker" Warwick. At Plymouth landed Katharine of Arragon. The fleet that dispersed the Armada lay in Plymouth Sound, and from the Cattewater sailed the *Mayflower* for the New World beyond the sea. But Plymouth came chiefly to the front during the Civil War, holding out against the Royalists through three sieges. There was fighting, too, at Salcombe, but this time the besieged were Royalists. Of this we shall treat later.

Torbay is celebrated as being the spot where William of Orange landed in 1688, and the people of Brixham still preserve the stone upon which he first set foot. With the rest of the coast history has not much to do, though perhaps Bideford deserves passing notice as a port of some enterprise in those stirring days when Devon was the first to send forth ships to explore the shores of America. These "seadogs of Devon" made the name of their county glorious, and Devon may well be proud of such men as Drake, Raleigh, Gilbert, and Grenville.

But merely as an introduction this chapter has grown long enough. As it is, nothing has been said of Lundy Island, which, although no part of Devonshire, is, in a manner, connected with it. This we shall reach by-and-by. Now let us start on our walk, and see this fine scenery, these historic seaports, for ourselves.

# PART I.

## THE COAST OF NORTH DEVON.

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### CHAPTER II.

#### THE BORDERS OF DEVON AND SOMERSET.

The great sea banks, whose summits thrive  
Where the long clouds of autumn smoke,  
See the red rays of sunset dive  
In the leaf-billows of the oak.

E. G. ALDRIDGE ("The Two Edens").

On the Moorland—Coaches—County Gate—Old Barrow—The Seaward  
Slopes—Valley of the Lyn—Coscombe—Glenthorne—The Coast  
Pathway—The Foreland—A Foggy Incident—The Gun Caverns—  
Countisbury.

FRESH from across the moorlands comes the breeze, stirring the heather till it rustles again, and whistling with cheery note through the long coarse grass. Above it drives the white clouds merrily—below it crinkles the sea into a thousand crisp wavelets. Shadows move slowly over the waste, turning each hill momentarily purple, staining the dingy waters of the Severn Sea with a passing dye of blue. Down in the combe there is a "moving" in the tree tops—each crown bends responsive to the masterful wind. But beneath, about the boles, there is stillness, for the combe is deep, and the great gorse-bespangled slopes shut out all but the faintest zephyr.

For awhile there is no sound or sign of life—the wind and the sunshine seem to fill the world. Not even the hum of a bee laden with spoil from the heather, sweetest of all

honey, breaks upon the ear. Indeed, it is yet too early for the bees to be about, for the little pink bells do not show till June at earliest, and this is springtime. The white road running over the moors eleven, twelve, thirteen hundred feet above the sea is empty throughout its long perspective. Not even a shepherd is in sight.

Yet the solitude is not oppressive. We know that hidden in the valley just over the brow are the scattered cottages of Oare: that below, among the oaks at our feet, is Glenthorne, and that beyond the bend in the road is Cosgate, a little house placed at the gate in the wall that marks the boundary between Devon and Somerset. And surely this broad road, wild though it be, connecting Lynton with Porlock cannot long lie desert. No—even as we gaze, a dark mass tops the distant brow, and the “Katerfelto” coach, crowded with holiday-seekers, comes rattling towards us, drawn by four stout horses which have not yet had time to tire of the West Country hills. On it rolls, the harness jingling gaily, and the bars swinging with motion almost rhythmical with the even trot of the steeds. As it approaches Cosgate the guard executes a fanfare on the horn; the housewife, with hands fresh from the flour bin, rushes to the door and deftly catches a parcel; a couple of children tumble over each other in their haste to get past mother’s skirts; there is a smile and a word of greeting, and the shining black and red vehicle swings through the gate into Devonshire, and vanishes with another fanfare round the heathery slope of Old Barrow. And again all is silence.

In this land of no railways, these coaches are quite a feature, and it goes without saying that they are by far the pleasantest means of reaching “the delicious scenery of North Devon.” Furthermore, to those approaching it from the eastward they are the only means—unless, indeed, the traveller (being exempt from the pangs of *mal de mer*) elect to take one of the excursion steamers that ply so

frequently during the summer months to Lynmouth and Ilfracombe. And what a drive it is! From the very terminus at Minehead the road passes through scenes of beauty ever changing. The first stage of six miles to Porlock is through a country fertile and richly wooded, yet with wide sweeps of moorland on both sides—the seaward hills of Minehead and Selworthy and Bossington on the right, Grabhurst and Exmoor on the left, the latter heaving up in vast shoulders to its culminating point of Dunkery Beacon, seventeen hundred feet above the sea.

At Porlock—old-world village, beloved of Southey—the moor begins in earnest, and the horses have a severe piece of collar work in the two-mile ascent of one of the steepest hills in Britain. Then comes an easy stretch of several miles straight over the moorlands, with wonderful peeps of the sea hundreds of feet below, and of far-reaching steppes of moor rolling away to the sky line. And so Cosgate is reached, and Somerset exchanged for Devon.

Behind Cosgate—it is also called County Gate—the road, as we have said, winds round the base of a heathery slope. The swelling (one cannot call it a point) nearest the sea is crowned by an ancient earthwork. Who built Old Barrow, and *when*, is a matter for speculation. It is not a barrow at all, by the way, but a “camp,” and the three concentric rings are in a singularly perfect state of preservation. Standing just within Cosgate, on the very frontiers of Devonshire, it seems as though it were erected to command the entrance into that county. But this is, of course, mere fancy. Old Barrow existed long before the counties of Devon and Somerset were heard of—certainly before the days of Alfred, and possibly, nay probably, before the Saxon came over, ostensibly to drive out the northern barbarian, but really to found a kingdom of his own. Scarcely, indeed, is it too much to suppose that it was a refuge of the wild Celt at the day when Cæsar landed on the Kentish

shore. A little later, when the masters of the world drove their roads hither and thither over the mountains and valleys, the hills and dales of Britain, Old Barrow was perhaps a Roman camp, and Roman eagles and Roman helmets may have glittered on this moorland fastness of the West. The earthwork is not of Roman plan, certainly, but this does not prove that the Romans never *occupied* it. Like the thrush, the Legionaries often found the nests of others vastly convenient, and in many and many an instance the poor Briton was driven from his last refuge by the ruthless conqueror.

So, in any event, Old Barrow is very ancient—so ancient, indeed, that the ramparts have worn down, till like the low mud wall of Rome itself they may almost be leapt over. For even the outermost vallum is but nine feet high at the highest part, while the second rises but three feet, and the inner varies from four to six. In the centre of the space inclosed by this last, which is about a hundred feet in diameter, is a small mound; and this may have been a look-out station or the place for the chieftain's hut or tent. On the northern or landward side was the entrance.

The downs about this earthwork are so unusually dry and free from bog that one wonders how the inhabitants managed for water. There are no traces of a well or spring, and, so far as I know, the nearest stream is in the combe above Glenthorne—at least six hundred feet below. As we lie on these weathered ramparts and gaze into the depths beneath, we idly picture the beleaguered savage stealing forth under cover of night and gliding down the steep hillside to fetch the precious fluid. How he fared when a cordon was drawn round his fortress is a puzzle.

From Old Barrow, which is eleven hundred and thirty-two feet above the sea, you can see the Channel for miles, from the great promontory of the Foreland on the English side, and from the peninsula of Gower on the Welsh, to the



islets called the Steep and Flat Holm and the cliffs of Penarth. Opposite, if the day be clear, range after range of mountains rises from the horizon, blurred here and there by the smoke of collieries or the smelting furnaces of Landore and Swansea. Scores, sometimes hundreds, of sails may be counted on the narrowing waterway: stately ship and barque, graceful schooner, clumsy coaster, while, more numerous than either,

The floating cargo tanks  
Of Bremen, Leith, and Hull,

as Rudyard Kipling calls them—in other words, steamers—plough steadily to and fro.

It is a pity that the water is not cleaner. The colour of this Bristol Channel is undeniably dingy, and, say what we can in its favour, it is, even down here, many degrees removed from the clear green of the Atlantic or the blue of the English Channel. Still there are many beautiful tints, and, save when seen under a leaden sky, the blending of grey and blue, and at times a kind of rose colour, has quite a rich effect. And what adds to the charm is that the water is so often seen through a mass of foliage, and if anything can beautify and refresh and throw into contrast the duller colours of Nature, surely it is the transparent green of the oak.

And oaks are everywhere along the seaboard. Look into the Glenthorne Combe below. Oaks surround and nearly hide the mansion, oaks fill the bottoms, oaks climb the hills, till the very heather is crowded out, and for the first six hundred feet above the sea can get little foothold. For seven miles eastward these oak woods cling to the hills that fall from the bare moor to the boulder beach. But at Porlock Bay they cease, its further horn, Hurlstone Point, thrusting itself into the waters treeless as the hill tops themselves.

So much for the view seaward. Towards the land we

can see little but the moorland, unless we cross the downs for half a mile or so. Then the hill sinks abruptly into a deep valley running parallel with the coast—the valley of the Lyn. Here are more oaks, and many elms and sycamores too, for this Lyn stream is wooded nobly. Do you see that deep fold yonder running well into the moors at right angles to the Lyn? That is the Badgworthy Valley, and branching from it some three miles distant is the Doone Glen, once, if tradition and Mr. Blackmore are to be credited, the lair of a gang of robbers—ay, and worse than that.

Faint on the ear rises the voice of the Lyn. He is not in flood to-day, for the weather has been, for a wonder, dry, and it is only after heavy and continuous rain that the little river becomes really noisy. But what the local rhyme says of the Horner Brook—there is less rhyme than reason, by the way—is equally true of the Lyn :

When Dunkery's head cannot be seen,  
Horner will have a flooded stream !

and when the rain clouds settle in good earnest on the downs about Lucott Hill a flood of brown water fills the bottom of every combe and goyal and gully and

Down from his mountain lair careers the Lyn.

The Lyn Valley is not populous. There is Oare certainly—you can perhaps distinguish the little grey church in that grove of ash and sycamore, side by side with the farm where, according to Blackmore, the Ridds once dwelt, and where sweet Lorna was sheltered so long from the fierce outlaws of Badgworthy. There are a few cottages, too, at Malmsmead Bridge further down—in fact, the only group of any size in the whole parish of Oare—and there is another hamlet at Brendon. Here and there, set among the pastures stretching up the steppes, may be seen a farmhouse or cottar's dwelling, here and there a thatched linhay (which is good Devonshire for *shed*). But with these

exceptions the glen of the Lyn has suffered little or nothing at the hand of man.

Such is the scenery on this the borderland of Devon and Somerset. There is no district so lovely in all the lovely West as this about the spurs of Exmoor, no coast line more beautiful, and perhaps none more grand—certainly none more lofty—between Portishead and Land's End. This Lyn stream alone, short as it is, would take a week's exploration. As for the coast between Glenthorne and Ilfracombe, you may know it for years without satiety. In it are the most romantic coves, above it the most mountainous bluffs and headlands anywhere in the West or South of England. And it is along the face of these great downs, this "massive sea front of Exmoor," that we are now about to wander.

To reach the cliff pathway we must go down four or five hundred feet into the deep combe under Cosgate—Coscombe it is called. Down the bottom beneath the trees the air is musical with the babble of a tiny stream, here murmuring over pebbles, there tumbling over shelves of rock, but all the while falling rapidly to the sea—falling in less than a mile close on a thousand feet. Ferns dip their fronds into the runnel, hawthorn spans it with a bridge of snow. In spring its banks are starred with primroses—later the wild hyacinth takes possession, filling the air with its delicate perfume.

A hundred and fifty feet above the sea the glen opens, and here, in a little green plateau among the woods, is Glenthorne. The situation is unique; never was mansion placed in spot more romantic. At the back of the house are one or two patches of meadow; all about it, except to the north, are towering hills, their tops only visible above the sea of foliage. The only drawback is lack of sunshine; it must be still early in the day when the sun sinks behind those western downs. Yet pastures and gardens are green and fertile.

The house is a pretty building in the Tudor style, surrounded on two sides by a terrace overlooking a diminutive lawn. Everything has been done to make the little domain perfect of its kind. Along the cliffs stretch the gardens, with seats placed here and there beneath trees that almost overhang the restless tide below, the murmur of which mingles with the gentle whisperings of the leaves. Towards the bottom of the glen the stream is crossed by weirs forming miniature fishponds, where, through the moving shadows, the trout dart to and fro.

To the casual visitor the house is not shown. A peep through the windows, however, reveals that the walls are covered with some old works of art, and that there are many "objects of bigotry and virtue." Murray tells us that in the hall is a mantelpiece that once belonged to Cardinal Wolsey.

A pathway leads westward to the kitchen garden and carriage road. Although the descent through Coscombe is but a mile, this drive does not reach the high road, right overhead, in less than three! This, more than any amount of description, will give some idea of the mountainous character of the country. The drive is a series of zigzags.

For a short distance we follow it where it runs through a pine wood, leaving it at one of the elbows to pass through a stone gateway surmounted by a lion couchant and flanked by towers presided over by eagles—an unexpected piece of architecture in a spot so secluded as this. Beyond is the open face of the cliff-slopes that sink so many hundreds of feet to the beach or foreshore of grey boulders.

About midway in the slope a mossy track leads westward, at first below overhanging masses of rock, half hid in heather and broom, or starting forth from a thicket of rhododendron. For the owner of Glenthorne has managed to combine most happily nature with cultivation, and shrubs that are usually seen in gardens mingle with the wild plants

inherent to the soil as if to the manner born. But in half a mile all this comes to an end, and we reach a wicket, the boundary of Mr. Halliday's domain.

And now, full in front, looms the great mass of the Foreland, the pinkish-grey screes that strew its flank giving it a colouring of extraordinary richness. The bare hillsides, above and below, are patched with these screes, too, the *débris* of countless centuries. Here and there a few oaks manage to pick up a living on the wind-swept slopes; but, as a rule, there is little but grass, fern, or heather, till, rounding a corner, we pass into the wooded glen called Wingate Combe—a deep cleft, watered, as usual, by a streamlet. Making a great curve inland, the path sweeps round the upper end of the glen and crosses to Desolate Combe, down which courses another stream, meeting where the combes converge, five hundred feet below, the brook of the Wingate Glen. Thence, though hidden from our view by masses of foliage, the brook falls headlong to the sea beneath a conical mass of rock called—I know not why—Sir Robert's Chair. Perhaps it may owe its name to one Sir Robert Croscombe, who lived "once upon a time" at Croscombe Barton in Martinhoe, and who, for his sins, haunts the cliffs of that seaboard parish, accompanied by certain hounds who breathe blue flame and behave, in short, as phantom hounds always do behave. But this is only conjecture.

Desolate Combe, with its "rounded woods dark with heavy foliage" and warm, sheltered nooks, certainly belies its name. But the lonely hill farm at the top of the combe, far, far overhead, and which is called Desolate, too, has a name fitting enough; and it is the farm, doubtless, that has given its name to the combe—not the combe to the farm.

And barrenness follows. Save for a stunted thorn or two, the cliffs are again bare—craggs break through the bracken, and screes cover fearful steeps. We appreciate the words of a guide book. Alluding to this pathway, it

says: "It is called a horse path, but few would venture along it otherwise than on foot." Indeed, to call it Alpine is not far-fetched, and it is without the protection to Alpine paths afforded. There is no fence whatever, nor any sign of wall, save in the gully called Pudleap Gurts, where the path is carried onward by a wall built across the glen. But even this has no parapet.

Perhaps it is as well that it has not. For though the wall may be twenty feet high on one side, it is level with the ground on the other, so sharply does the land fall seaward. And there are traces that show that in wet weather a torrent pours down to the beach, sweeping right over it. Twigs and rotten branches lie in all directions, and, in the stony bed of the gully, the ruin of decayed trees, prone beneath the shade of those still growing, adds to the wildness of the scene.

Now into a wooded recess—each with its brook and each, with rare exception, its grove—now out on to the breezy hillside this romantic pathway wanders, until three miles from Glenthorne it strikes a grassy road zigzagging down past Rodney Farm to a little dent in the shore called Rodney (or Countisbury) Cove. Here there is a strip of shingle, just enough for a coaster that does not mind a little bumping to lie while discharging the cargo of coal, which straining horses drag up the hills to the farms and hamlet above, and, as the Devon people call it, "in over."

Leaving the green ride that passes over the summit to Countisbury village, we descend through a dip in the hills to Coddow Combe, a Valley of Desolation indeed. On one side heaves up the shoulder of a rocky ridge, on the other the stony flank of the Foreland. From the turf at the bottom of the combe to the height of three hundred feet at least climb the vast fields of splintered rock. It looks as if a swarm of giant navvies had been at work tipping refuse down the declivity. At the foot of it is the usual brook, a

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THE FORELAND. FROM A SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR.



short-lived thing, scarcely a mile in length, which ends in a narrow thread of spray falling over the precipice at the combe mouth.

It is easy enough to follow the path round the head of this glen to the top of the Foreland. The height of the actual promontory is about seven hundred feet, but it is much loftier at the base, where the land rises rapidly to Countisbury Common and Lloyd's Signal Station, which is only a few feet under a thousand. The panorama that comes suddenly into view as we top the ridge is really magnificent. At our feet lies Lynmouth Bay, with the twin villages of Lynton and Lynmouth perched, the one at the top, the other at the bottom of the wooded steeps that look down upon the meeting of the Lyn stream with the sea. Beyond rises the rampart of the Valley of Rocks, and a line of coast, here timbered, here bare, but always bold, stretches westward, ending in the serrated outline of High Veer, over which looms dim the head of the Great Hangman. Looking back, we can trace the coast line nearly to Glenthorne, while the eastern limit is the range of the North Hill running from Porlock Bay towards Minehead.

It has been said that there are the remains of a Danish encampment on the Foreland, but I have walked from end to end more than once and can find nothing of the kind. It was once, however, under cultivation, or, at any rate, divided into fields; and low banks, the foundations of ancient fences, may be distinguished right out to the point where it falls in a steep and rocky slope to the sea.

The Foreland is a nasty place in a fog. I have vivid recollections of an adventure in the bay below during the worst specimen known for fifty years. We put off in one of the Lynmouth shore-boats to await the arrival of the steamer from Ilfracombe up Channel. After spending an hour and a half drifting about the bay searching for the steamer, which, by the way, was meanwhile searching for

us, we gave it up, and returned to *terra firma*. Scarcely had we felt our way thither when the fog lifted, and we discovered that the steamer had been within an ace of running on the Foreland, being only stopped by the noise of the breakers. When we at last got on board the scene was the reverse of cheerful. One lady was in hysterics, another in tears, and giving promise of lapsing at the shortest notice into a similar condition. And small blame to them. A minute more, and they would have been shipwrecked, and perhaps had little chance of indulging in either tears or laughter again.

Another danger of this coast is the suddenness with which the squalls come tearing down the combes. As a rule, there is no warning whatever. I have heard of a pilot boat (than which there are no craft more staunch in the Bristol Channel), while lying in a dead calm, suddenly thrown on her beam ends by one of these moorland gusts, and I have myself been on board a steamer which has had her sail blown away off Coddow Combe. It will be long before the Ilfracombe people forget the loss of the yacht *Monarch*, that capsized off the Torrs with so lamentable a loss of life. It is not without good reason that I take this opportunity of warning all whom it may concern against attempting to sail along these shores without competent boatmen.

I had nearly forgotten the caves beneath the Foreland. There are four of them, and they are known as the Gun Caverns, owing to the booming sound made by the waves driven into them by a storm. With the exception of the one farthest east, they penetrate the cliffs for a hundred feet or so, and are about fifteen feet high. But the eastern cave is double the length of the others. The strata in and about these caves is interesting, the lines being nearly vertical, tilted at a sharp angle, or contorted into serpentine curves. The rocks are best seen from the sea, but the caves

must be visited from the land, and then only by a very rough scramble by way of Sillery Sands and at dead low water.

On the southern side of Countisbury Common lies the church and the handful of weather-worn cottages that make up Countisbury village. The church in particular has a bleached look, as it well may, for is it not drenched by every shower that scuds across the moor? It is not an interesting church, and has nothing noticeable about it, except a low pinnaced tower, and a queer screen composed of a set of rails supporting a heavy architrave. The style of architecture is a poor Perpendicular. Abutting on the churchyard, in which will be noticed the graves of many drowned sailors, is the village school, encased in an armour of slate, almost the only building of any size in the village—there are only about a dozen cottages altogether—except the Blue Bull, where the wayfarer may get refreshment of thorough Devonshire kind—excellent butter and cream, home-made whortleberry jam, and eggs laid that morning—eggs that know not the interior of a box, and on which the odour of sawdust passeth not.

## CHAPTER III.

### LYNMOUTH AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

A river bounds o'er bouldered ways  
And clasps a dozen affluent rills,  
While up the glen I seem to gaze  
Into the secret heart of hills.

E. G. ALDRIDGE.

Countisbury Hill—Coach Accidents—An Earthwork—Lynmouth—Glen  
Lyn—The Cliff Railway—Lynton—Valley of Rocks—Legends—Ring  
Cliff Cove—Duty Point—Lee Abbey—Story of the Whichehalses—The  
Doones.

THE road from Countisbury to Lynmouth is not of a nature calculated to soothe the nervous. In a mile and a half it drops eight hundred feet, the last part being so steep that I have had to pass my arm round the rail of the box seat of a waggonette to keep myself from slipping on to the backs of the horses. It is true that the cushions were of that abomination known as "American leather;" still, it needs a pretty good angle to disturb the balance of a sitting man even when American leather covers the matter sat upon.

Cut midway between the sea and the rocky ridge of the Torrs that separate the Channel from the glen of the Lyn, this road commands a view that is excelled by few highways in the kingdom. The hillside sinks so abruptly to the sea that you cannot see the beach below—you look right down upon the waters of the bay patched with shifting light and shadow. At your back the huge mass of the Foreland, stained brown and pink and red, seems to shut out all the eastern world; westward the view is bounded by the

heights of Lynton. Lynton itself never looks more picturesque than from this "cornice" road—at sunset the effect is quite aerial. Then the rather too obtrusive hotels (not to speak of Mr. Newnes' new mansion on the hill top) are marvellously softened by the subdued light; hard angles vanish and staring windows become absorbed in the misty blue. The Valley of Rocks Hotel with its wings and turrets becomes the palace of a magician, and Lynton might be a city of the Thousand and One Nights.

On the seaward side of this road nothing but a low bank of turf and stones prevents coach and passengers rolling down the giddy height on to the beach. In places, indeed, this bank hardly seems high or substantial enough to be an efficient protection, and one wonders what would happen if the horses bolted and ran the heavy vehicle against it. I remember once asking the driver if there ever had been an accident. He replied in the negative, but casually added that a *wheel* had come off a few days before. Evidently as it was the off wheel the matter made no impression upon him. "Suppose it had been the near wheel?" I suggested. He smiled and looked thoughtful.

The incident reminds me of a remark made by an artist friend, a man of some eminence in the old Water Colour Society. I once tried to persuade him to take a coach ride from Minehead to Ilfracombe, and strove to calm his fears by saying that accidents were almost unknown. "Accidents!" he exclaimed, with a humorous twinkle in his eye; "they never call anything an accident in North Devon *unless somebody is killed!*"

As a matter of fact, accidents—whether of the kind defined by my friend or otherwise—are of the rarest occurrence, and this speaks volumes for the care and skill of these North Devon coachmen. During an acquaintance with this country, now extending over many years, I can only recall one accident attended with fatal results. It

happened in 1893 on the hillside facing us, where the Ilfracombe road as it enters Lynton sweeps round the head of the precipice above the torrent of the West Lyn. The horses, startled by some children waving flags, bolted, and rushed headlong towards the brow of the tremendous hill that drops to Lynmouth. Here the driver managed to throw them. Had they once started down the hill every soul would probably have been killed. The coach capsized; one horse fell over the precipice into the wooded glen below and was killed, and the passengers were hurled—some into the road, others over the wall into the depths. Two were seriously injured, and one—a lady—died. The driver—a man who had handled the reins for many years—was so hurt that he was *hors de combat* for months, and the guard, who fell beneath the coach, was crushed severely. This catastrophe raised quite a commotion both in Lynton and Ilfracombe, and timid people hesitated long before trusting themselves upon the coaches. The excitement, however, though natural enough, was greater than the occasion demanded—accidents must happen sometimes, and why should coaches be exempt?

And the popularity of these coaches is, after all, the best evidence of the rarity of an accident. Thousands are carried by them every year, and the Lynton disaster has now little or no effect upon the public mind. Every day during the summer and autumn two or three start from Ilfracombe, Lynton, or Minehead, and the difficulty is not on the part of the proprietors to fill the seats, but on the part of the tourists to get them.

But we are at the top of Countisbury Hill. Just below the village, on the neck of land at the eastern end of the Torrs, are the remains of a substantial earthwork, usually called "Roman," owing perhaps to the shape being rectangular, and to the fact that Roman coins have been found in the vicinity. The rampart overlooking Chiselton

Combe, a green hollow sloping down to the Lyn, is some thirty-five feet in height. On the other sides the ridge falls away so sharply that little or no bank was needed, and what may have been there has now completely weathered away. The western end is protected by the rocky summits of the Torrs.

Still, notwithstanding the *imprimatur* of the Bishop of Cloyne and other antiquaries, there are, or were, some who will have none of the "camp" theory at all. Of these was old Mr. Baker, who kept the Castle Hotel for so many years. He always declared that the so-called camp was only the remains of a "drift" which he remembered being cut through the hill by certain people who were examining the ground for iron, and this "drift" was continued beyond the "camp" and down the seaward face of the hill nearly to the road—where it may still be seen. It is possible, however, that the camp was there before the drift, and that the line of the latter followed the eastern end. Still, the matter must be left in doubt.

From this bank you may almost throw a stone into the river on one side and into the sea—seven hundred and fifty feet below—on the other. You look into the grandest part of the valley. From Chiselton Combe, indeed from far above, the gorge of the Lyn right down to the harbour mouth is a scene of romantic beauty. The greater part is densely wooded, yet high above the tree tops, grey crags break forth from the "cleaves," mantled in ivy, and clothed about their feet with thicket. The rush of the Lyn swirling round mossy boulders fills the air—it is, indeed, the only sound audible except the breeze stirring in the gorse brake, or the murmur of the sea, scarcely to be heard save when a stiff nor'-wester drives the waves across the bay against the boulders beneath the Foreland.

The steepest part of the road passes through a copse which entirely conceals Lynmouth until we are close upon

it. A sharp bend at the very foot, and the Lyndale Hotel comes suddenly into view and the bridge that spans the clear flood of the river. On this bridge everyone must loiter, for from it the gorge is seen to great advantage, notwithstanding the presence in the foreground of sundry not very picturesque cottages. By the way, were I the owner of the Lyn banks, I would, methinks, allow no house to be put up that did not harmonise with the scenery. Hard, angular buildings, unbroken by gable or projection, seem hardly the thing in the loveliest glen in Devon. Something in the style of a Swiss *châlet*, now, would surely be more appropriate than these stern, straight walls and steely-looking roofs of slate. Look how the slopes descend, scarred with rock and scree, or half covered with oak and ash! Is it not like an Alpine pass? And, if you walk a little way up the valley, other vistas will open out, each lovelier than the last—wood, and coppice, and rock—until in the distance, far away against the sky line, the eye rests at last upon some breezy croft high up on the borderland of Exmoor.

Overhead is the Lyn Cliff, beetling above another wooded ravine down which the West Lyn pours its torrent into the main river. The grounds are private, but may be explored upon payment of the smallest of silver fees—a fee which no one will grudge who ascends to the falls at the head, for in less than half a mile the river descends five hundred feet, its channel almost choked by boulders, and its banks a mass of ferns. Bright patches of sky appear through the tree tops; here and there, as we climb far up the gorge, is caught a glimpse of the sea framed in by masses of foliage. Such is Glen Lyn.

Lynmouth consists of a single street, facing the river. Every other house is a hotel or lodging-house, but the general appearance of the place is not unpicturesque, and some regard has evidently been had for the romantic surroundings. At the bottom is the rough little harbour



overlooked by a square tower, the tints of which have mellowed so rapidly under the hand of Time, that it might be three hundred years old at least. As a matter of fact, it dates but from the latter end of the last century. It was the gift of a General Rawdon, a resident to whom this village on the Lyn owes no small debt. It is a copy of a tower on the Rhine.

Lynmouth was once a thriving fishing village—not innocent, too, of smuggling. For some reason or other, that most fickle of fish, the herring, chose to make the bay its favourite resort. For ten years—from 1787 to 1797—they could almost be dipped out of the sea in baskets, and were even used as manure. Then the shoals suddenly departed, and, for a long time now, have never visited the bay in anything approaching the former quantity. So Lynmouth has to fish for other fry, and does it pretty successfully. Every year does the shoal of visitors increase, and, probably, they pay better than the herrings.

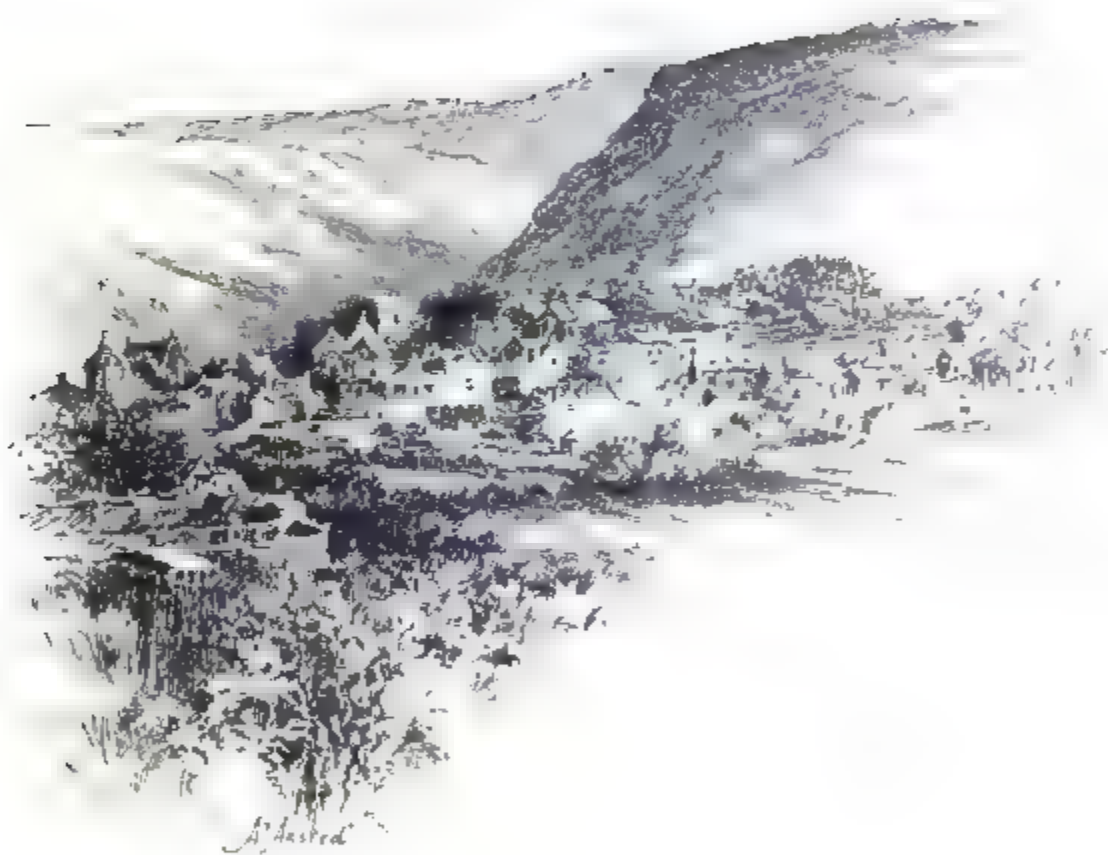
The twin towns—or villages—are connected by the steepest passenger railway in the kingdom—perhaps in the world. It runs straight up the hillside at a gradient of one in one and a quarter. The motive power is hydraulic, the water being contained in a tank beneath the cars, which are connected by wire hawsers. The descending car raises that ascending, and danger is reduced to a minimum by automatic brakes. This Cliff Railway, as it is called, was initiated by Mr. Newnes, the journalist, whose mansion we noticed just now upon the hill top above. That it—the railway, not the house—should add to the beauty of the surroundings is of course impossible, but it must be admitted that every care has been taken to make it as unobjectionable as may be. It is in a deep cutting, and, except when seen from the sea, is not much *en évidence*.

The shore is covered with round boulders, through which a channel has been made for the few coasters that trade to

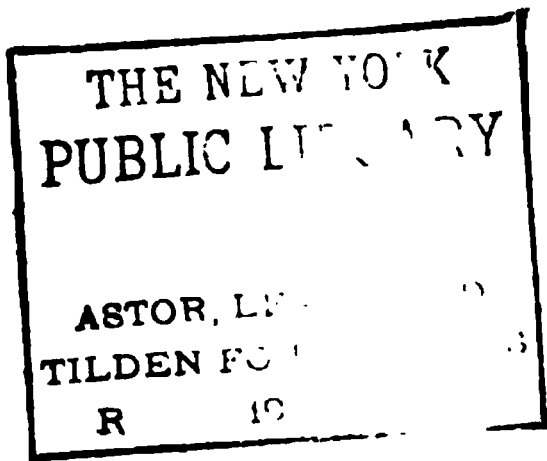
and from this most miniature of ports. As the nearest railway station is eighteen miles away, a thriving trade is done in coals and other heavy merchandise, which will, I suppose, decrease in the not very far off day when Lynton shall be united with the railway system. The advent of that day we cannot hail with much enthusiasm. At present Lynton and Lynmouth know little of the almost omnipresent youth in blazer and flannels, but should the railway come, the tripper will come, too, and the valley of the Lyn will be hopelessly cockneyfied. There is no other spot like this Lyn Valley in the West, and it would indeed be a pity if what Gainsborough called "the most delightful place for a landscape painter this country can boast" were overrun by the irrepressible tourist.

Along the side of the declivity that falls to the West Lyn the road winds upwards to Lynton. The town lies in and on the sides of a bowl or hollow about four hundred feet above the sea, with a moorland ridge of nearly equal height rising at the back. It is so packed away, that until you are right in the street you have no idea that there is a town at all. From a distance the impression that a traveller gets of Lynton is one of hotels and villas. There are plenty of both, but there is a town as well. It is quite a small place, however, with but one street of any pretensions, where are the principal shops and most of the hotels aforesaid. Here, too, is the church, a building of no particular interest, but which has been well restored. Lynmouth, too, has its church (the parson serving Countisbury as well), a neat little Early English building, but severely modern.

The ridge on which stands the northern part of Lynton commands a wide view of the country eastward, and the prospect from the grounds of the hotels—those of the Valley of Rocks Hotel in particular—is most beautiful. In an ancient guide book is an amusing remark anent the rivalry between these hotels. "At Lynton," says the



A BIT OF LYNTON.



writer, "telescopes are employed at the rival houses for the prompt discovery of the approaching traveller. He had better, therefore, determine beforehand on his inn, or he will become a bone of contention to a triad of postboys, who wait with additional horses at the bottom of the hill to drag the carriage to its destination." But this was in the old posting days, when people had to drive all the way from Taunton, and when those levellers, the coaches, had not yet begun to discharge their swarms at the foot of Lynton Hill. Neither were there steamers then disembarking passengers into the great heavy shore-boats nearly every day from June to October. I fancy the hotels have enough to do now to find room for the multitude, without indulging in the rivalry which Murray found so rampant nearly half a century ago.

The favourite walk about Lynton (next, perhaps, to Watersmeet, where the Combe Park water joins the Lyn beneath the shade of woodland cliffs) is the Valley of Rocks. There are two ways of approaching it—one through the eastern mouth of the Lynton valley, the other by means of the North Walk, which runs along a precipice above the sea, and enters the famous valley between two of the great piles of rock which look so much like the ruins of ancient fortresses that Southey called the place "a city of the Anakim." And the walk is far the finer approach.

It commences below the big hotel, and, passing some villas, soon reaches the cliffs. A hundred feet or more overhead, the Chimney Rock starts boldly from the rocky ridge that divides the valley from the sea. Beyond is another tor, known by the fanciful name of Ragged Jack. Below the path the cliff, or, rather, declivity, falls headlong to the sea, breaking away towards the bottom in sheer precipice.

Presently, as the path curves inward, the majestic Castle Rock makes its appearance. It is steep enough on the side facing the land, but the seaward face sinks like a wall. At this point the view is magnificent, and one does not

wonder that the bend beneath Ragged Jack should be a favourite spot with both artist and photographer—though perhaps I ought not to make a distinction, for verily the gentlemen of the camera think themselves artists nowadays—ay, and call themselves such, too. However, let that pass. In the foreground is the great rock, towering some four hundred feet straight up from the sea. Beyond, the headland of Duty Point, crowned by a picturesque though modern prospect tower, stands forth against the tender green of the oaks of Woodabay, while the view is closed by the promontory of High Veer.

Beneath the Castle Rock the stony ridge opens suddenly and we enter the valley. Immediately opposite, on the slope of the down that falls with such mountainous sweep, is the Devil's Cheesewring, a tall column of blocks and slabs piled one upon the other, almost after the manner of the Dartmoor Tors. Eastward and westward stretches the valley. It is best described in the words of Southey, who calls it—rather grandiloquently, we think—"one of the greatest wonders in the West of England." "Imagine," he says, "a narrow vale between two ridges of hills somewhat steep; the southern hill turfed; the vale which runs from east to west, covered with huge stones and fragments of stone among the fern that fills it; the northern ridge completely bare, excoriated of all turf and all soil, the very bones and skeleton of the earth; rock reclining upon rock, stone piled upon stone, a huge, terrific mass. A palace of the pre-Adamite kings, a city of the Anakim, must have appeared so shapeless and yet so like the ruins of what had been shaped after the waters of the flood subsided. I ascended with some toil the highest point; two large stones inclining on each other formed a rude portal on the summit. Here I sat down. A little level platform, about two yards long, lay before me, and then the eye immediately fell upon the sea, far, very far, below. I never felt the sublimity of solitude before."

But the sublimity of solitude has been somewhat discounted since Southey's day. A carriage road now runs down the valley, and a path has been cut to the summit of the Castle Rock. Excursionists picnic among the bracken below, and the popping of corks and the lays of one Albert Chevalier harmonise but ill with the wild grandeur of the scene.

Some of these rocks have their legends. Ragged Jack, for instance, is the petrified form of an unholy wight who headed a party of Sunday merrymakers to the valley. While they were dancing, the Devil suddenly appeared and—with rather an inexplicable regard for the Sabbath—turned them into stone. The Devil, too, lends his name to the Cheesewring, for here he manufactures his cheeses. This Cheesewring was once the uncanny abode of "Mother Melldrum," the wise woman of "Lorna Doone." Readers of that romance will remember the visit paid to her by John Ridd, who wished to know when he might again venture into the Doone Valley to see his sweetheart.

It is generally supposed, by the way, that Melldrum is a contraction of Mabel Durham, and, in a former work\* I have myself referred to the "wise woman" under that name. But a correspondent has recently suggested that the name is more likely to have been Mapledurham. "In West Somerset," he writes, "I have met families of the name of Mapledoram, pronounced by natives *Maldrum*, and I have frequently wondered whether this is the old name of Mapledurham now slightly altered." The matter is not perhaps of any great consequence. Still to those people who are interested in tracing changes in surnames the information may be of interest.

Efforts have been made—chiefly by antiquaries of a past day—to prove that the Valley of Rocks was a haunt of the Druids. Polwhele, indeed, pronounces it the favourite

\* "An Exploration of Exmoor."

residence of this priesthood, and others even go so far as to trace the Gorseddu in the lines of stone below the Cheese-wring. Beyond a circle or two of stones, which look like the remains of walls inclosing sheepfolds or some kindred structure, I must confess that I see nothing of the "enigmatical figures" supposed to relate to Druidism, and should certainly be slow to connect these with the worship of the most terrible hierarchy that Britain has ever seen. The Valley of Rocks *may* have been

Old Druid's misty throne,

as some poet describes it, but in my humble opinion the throne is very misty indeed.

There are caves at the base of the Castle Rock, said by the Lynton folk to run a great distance, but in reality of little importance. They may be got at by descending a zigzag path into Ring Cliff Cove, a little bay between the Rock and Duty Point, where there is a sandy beach, the only decent bathing place this side of Sillery Sands.

From the wild Valley of Rocks we follow the road into a park, on the one side sweeping up towards woods, on the other rising to Duty Point. At the foot of the park is the cove of Lee Bay, overlooked by Lee Abbey, a picturesque mansion, a good deal younger than it looks, with its "modern antique" wall and tower. An older house—a house of which no traces now remain—was the dwelling of the De Whichehalses, a family driven from Holland by the persecution of the Duke of Alva. Here, till towards the close of the seventeenth century, they lived happily enough, and, had the course of love run smooth, their descendants might be living there still. But fate ruled otherwise. Jennifred, only child of Sir Edward de Whichehalse, was deserted by her lover, Lord Auberley, and, in despair, threw herself over the cliffs of Duty Point. De Whichehalse complained to the King, but James declined to interfere, and the consequence was that, when Monmouth landed, the



unhappy father threw in his lot with the usurper. It is said that at Sedgemoor he met Auberley face to face, and poor Jennifred was avenged.

The proscription of De Whichehalse followed as a matter of course, and, soon after his return to Lee, a party was sent to apprehend him. He got wind, however, of their approach, and embarked with a few of his adherents for Holland. But a storm overtook them, and all on board perished.

This Sir Edward de Whichehalse must have been the Baron de Whichehalse of "Lorna Doone" (though Mr. Blackmore calls him *Hugh*). The reader will remember the amusing interview between the "Baron" and Reuben Huckaback, when the latter applied for a warrant against the Doones, and the skilful way in which the Baron got out of the difficulty by explaining, much to poor Uncle Reuben's wrath, that "the malfeasance (if any) was laid in Somerset, but we, two humble servants of His Majesty, are in commission of his peace for the county of Devon only, and therefore could never deal with it."

While on this subject, I may mention that a writer has lately arisen who makes a clean sweep of the Doones altogether. In his "Annals of Exmoor," Mr Rawle says that "in the course of considerable research, not only among the national records relating to that part of the country, but county and parochial archives as well, no evidence whatever, either direct or indirect, has been found to warrant the assumption for one moment, that any such gang of outlaws and bandits, living by systematic blackmail levied upon the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, ever existed on Exmoor."

*Records* of the Doones there may be none, but of them and their doings there are divers *legends*, and the former vicar of an Exmoor parish tells me that his people were fully persuaded of their existence, and referred to

“them Dooneses” as people of whose presence on Exmoor there was “no manner of doubt whatever.” A writer in the *Western Antiquary*\* has taken the trouble to embody all that he could discover in an excellent paper, which lovers of “Lorna Doone”—and there are many—will, I am sure, thank me for bringing to their notice. He says that the first efforts to collect and preserve these legends were made more than half a century since by the vicar of Oare and certain friends who committed their information to writing. The collectors stated that the traditions referred to by them had been handed down to, and were preserved by, the old inhabitants, but that they had derived the details mainly from one Ursula Johnson, a reputed witch of great age, who, as I have since been informed, could remember her grandfather talking of the Doones as actual beings, and living on Exmoor, when he was a boy.

According to tradition, then, the ruins in the Doone Valley are those of eleven cottages erected about the middle of the seventeenth century, and inhabited by the Doones, a band of outlaws, who, for causes connected, in some way, with the Civil War, had retired to the hills of Exmoor.† As to their origin, all that can be said is that they were not West Countrymen, and that they were regarded by the folk about Exmoor as of good family.

They were an evil, lawless crew, subsisting entirely by robbery. To “lift” a farm was the least of their crimes. Arson and murder so often went hand in hand with felony, that they became the terror of the countryside. The following accounts of their doings were collected and reduced to writing :

\* Vol. iii., p. 221, “Blackmore’s Lorna Doone,” by J. R. Chanter.

† The ex-vicar above mentioned is of opinion that they were refugees from Sedgemoor. If this be the case, both Mr Blackmore and “the collectors of the legends” have antedated—though only a little—the time of their arrival.

On one occasion they robbed and murdered a man called "The Squire," who lived in a lonely house on the Warren, the site of which is still to be traced. On another they attacked Yanworthy Farm, near Glenthorne, but here they met with unexpected resistance. A plucky woman fired upon them, and they retreated, the blood of the wounded man staining the ground for some distance in the direction of their haunt. An ancient duck gun, preserved at Yanworthy, is to this day pointed out as the weapon with which this doughty deed was done.

The third incident is so horrible that it is difficult of belief. At twilight they surrounded a house at Exford. It took but a few minutes to obtain possession, for a maid-servant and baby were, at the moment, the only occupants. The former concealed herself in a large oven, and, from her hiding place saw the poor baby deliberately murdered, the Doones with brutal jocularly telling it, that if anyone asked who killed it, it might reply, "the Doones of Badgworthy." This saying has ever since been kept alive as a couplet in the district :

If anyone asks who killed thee,  
Tell 'un 'twas the Doones of Badgery.

This was the last straw. Flesh and blood could no longer endure such barbarity. The country rose *en masse*, the Doone stronghold was attacked, and the robbers and murderers exterminated.

"Besides these legends," says Mr. Chanter, "I am not aware of any actual historic details or authority as to the Doones—who they originally were, and whether disbanded soldiers or not, or where they came from before they settled in the valley, which in those days was far more retired and difficult of access than at present.

"But," some reader will remark, "what has all this got to do with the coasts of Devon?" Not much, I must admit. Indeed, I confess that I have seized this opportunity

for making the best case I can for the Doones. The fact is, we West Country folk do not like to be told that our pet outlaws had no existence, and are not at all grateful to Mr. Rawle for what he has told us. We have not so much romance; good or bad, that we can afford to lose a bit of it, and the story of the Doones of Badgworthy is regarded by the men of West Somerset and North Devon with quite as much affection as the folk of Nottingham regard the story of Robin Hood. And now back to Lee Bay.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MARTINHOE, TRENTISHOE, AND THE GREAT HANGMAN.

Lee Bay—The Smuggler and the Exciseman—Crock Meads—Woodabay—Martinhoe—North Devon Cottages—Martinhoe Church—Bishop Hannington—Hollow Combe—High Veer—Heddon's Mouth—Hunters' Inn—Trentishoe—An Old Man Yarn—Holdstone Down—Sherracombe—The Great Hangman—Miners' Caves.

LEE BAY, with the green slopes of the park at its head, its oak-hung rocks and leafy amphitheatre, is one of the loveliest coves in all Devon. But, like most other bays along this iron-bound coast, there is little or no sand. The floor is of rock, with just a strip of shingle round the verge.

Above the bay sweeps the road, presently climbing through the woods towards the moorland hamlet of Martinhoe. It runs along the cliff slopes nearly all the way, giving continual glimpses through interlacing foliage of the green-tinted water below—for the Channel is getting more transparent now, and the waves of the Atlantic begin to mingle with those of the Severn Sea. At one point this road approaches within a few yards of the precipice. Here the sea has worn a chasm, a place known to the "by-dwellers" as the Smuggler's Leap.

Many years ago, when dealings in contraband paid better than such dealings do to-day, a smuggler rode fast over these cliffs pursued by a king's officer. The exciseman had the better nag of the two, and drew rapidly on his quarry. As pursuer and pursued came abreast of the chasm they rode neck and neck, and the latter swerved aside to

avoid the officer's grasp. The movement was too much for the horse, who, with a wild snort, went over the brink. But the smuggler did not fall alone. Feeling himself going, he clutched wildly at his enemy, and they rolled into the abyss together. It is said that when their bodies were discovered by the seaweed gatherers "they were locked together in a vice-like grip which had hurled them into eternity."\*

The western horn of Lee Bay is Crock Point. Here the coast is low, sloping from the road to the sea. A little beyond, towards Woodabay, the land below the road sinks into a semicircular hollow or basin covered with trees. This depression was caused by a landslip. About the end of the last century the ground was worked for clay by some Dutchmen, who shipped the clay to Holland. Some time after, when the deposit was worked out, the land was taken by a farmer named Bromham. For some years all went well, but, one Sunday, news was brought to the farmer, as he sat in Martinhoe Church, that his land was sliding into the sea. The congregation turned out *en masse*, and did their best to save the poor fellow's crops. But the fall was so sudden that a great part was lost. An eyewitness tells how "thousands of tons of earth and clay—mostly the latter—were for weeks on the beach spread out to low-water mark. The clay was all colours—red, brown, yellow, and some a beautiful pure white. The clay lay scattered about in lumps, some as big as ships, and some smaller. The run took place almost all at once, and about nine acres were displaced. The occurrence was attributed to the penning up of the land springs in the old clay working. Some timber mining props were seen after the slip." The spot is known as Crock Meads, perhaps a corruption of *crack* meads—the cracked or broken meadows.

\* "Ilfracombe Guide."

A walk of half an hour from Crock Point brings us to Woodabay. The bay itself is a mere recess in the cliff at the base of a lofty semicircle of woodland. From the Glen Hotel you look down from an immense height over a sea of foliage covering the slopes almost to the water's edge. Above the woods a stretch of moorland rises another three hundred feet against the sky. Along the bald slope of the downs is cut the new road connecting Woodabay with the outer world, passing the head of Heddon's Mouth, a wild combe two or three miles to the westward. This road is the work of a syndicate, who are, it is said, going to do great things at Woodabay—towards the opening up (and probably cockneyfying) of this shady retreat. When I was last there an engineer was already busy taking soundings for a landing stage. As there are only six houses besides the two hotels—the lower, by the way, was once the Manor House of Martinhoe—the enterprise seems, as the Americans would say, a little “previous.”

It is a sore temptation to linger in these woods. Cool patches of shadow lie across the path, musical is the voice of the leaves stirred by the sea breeze, still more musical the song of the brook plunging down the glen to the stony shore below. The downs above shimmer in the glare of the sun, and Martinhoe Church is four hundred feet nearer heaven than we are. Still we must onward. As a poetic and punning tourist remarks in the visitors' book :

Whether it's wet,  
Whether it's hot,  
We have to weather it,  
Whether or not—

which—for a visitors' book—is rather good, if original.

There is no village at Martinhoe. A farm or two near the little grey church and the parsonage make up some sort of a hamlet, but of village there is none. You will not often find the typical village of the poet and the novelist in

North Devon. There are no peaked gables and timbered walls ; no diamond latticed casements ; no village green with its spreading elm, beneath which the fathers of the hamlet quaff " nut brown " ale and smoke " churchwardens " a yard long. No ; in these wilds the village, when there is one, has, as often as not, not even an inn, and the cottages are battered-looking tenements with slate roofs that have been patched and patched till, like the old Victory, there is little of the original left. Such are the moorland villages—if you want the picturesque cottage with roof of warm thatch and bowers of roses and honeysuckle you must descend into the vales inland. The moorland farmer, the moorland labourer, has something more important than the training of climbing plants over his whitewashed and rough stone walls. He has to keep a roof over the head of the " missus " and children, and exercise all his ingenuity to hold at bay the moorland gale, and deny admittance to the moorland rain.

Small as Martinhoe is, it has a pretty church. The architecture is Early English, with nave, chancel, and north aisle divided from the nave by an arcade of round columns. The white stone font is modern and well sculptured with foliage ; the basin stands upon pillars of coloured marble.

In the north aisle we notice a tablet to Margaret, daughter of Hugh Whichehalse of Lynton, wife of Richard Blackmore of Martinhoe. The date is 1683, so possibly this Hugh was the magistrate before whom " Uncle Rueben " demanded justice against the Doones.\* If this be the case, it looks as if the story of poor Jennifred were wrong in two particulars—first, in calling her father Edward ; and, secondly, in describing her as his only child. At the opposite end of the aisle another tablet is curious for the spelling. " Aisle " is rendered " Aley "—a corruption, it would seem, for " Alley."

\* *Vide p. 35, ante.*



Some of the epitaphs in the churchyard are quaintly worded. One in particular reminds us of Shakspeare's

Cursed be he that moves my bones,

though couched in milder language. John Berry of Parracombe, who died in 1784, thus addresses the bystander :

In this wall'd grave my bones are lain  
To have it so it was my mind  
And not to be removed I pray  
Till Christ's Resurrection Day.

Martinhoe once had for curate the martyred Bishop Hannington. He first came there in 1869 to read with the Rector, Mr Scriven, and on taking his degree was ordained to the curacy. Those who have read Mr Dawson's interesting history of his life and work will remember what an impression the restless undergraduate made on the quiet folk of Martinhoe, and what a favourite he became not only with the "Rectory people," but with every cottager in the parish.

Hannington was a keen observer, and some of his notes on the manners and customs of this sea-board parish are most amusing. He tells us in his Diary how the clerk at Trentishoe, having lost his wife, allowed but a few days to elapse before he borrowed a horse, and rode all over the parish seeking for a successor. Arriving at the Rectory, he proposed to *both* the servants, but was rejected. The widower, however, was in no wise cast down ; he persevered in his search for a helpmeet, and "at last found a lady bold enough and willing to take this step."

He delighted in the superstitions then (and, for the matter of that, still) prevalent in North Devon—the belief in the evil eye, or "overlooking ;" the power of a seventh son to touch for the King's Evil ; witchcraft, and so on. Once he attempted a little faith healing on his own account. He presented a sick woman with a bottle of coloured water, having a leaden medal attached to the cork. Handing this

to the woman with great solemnity, he directed her whenever she took a dose to turn the bottle round three times, taking particular care not to lose the medal, but to restore it to him when she was well. Strange to say the woman—and she had been an invalid for years—recovered. Great is the power of faith!

In the intervals of study (I am speaking of the days before his ordination), Hannington amused himself by making a breakneck path to some caves beneath the cliff. For awhile he managed to enlist the services of certain parishioners—villagers would be a misnomer, for there is, as I have said, no village at Martinhoe—but, one by one, they left him, frightened at the dangerous character of the work, and he and the rector's son were left to themselves. Success ultimately crowned their efforts, and Hannington "personally conducted" many visitors to the wild shore beneath these Martinhoe cliffs. Two of the most distinguished were Lord Tenterden and Mr. Justice Pollock, who "expressed the greatest astonishment at the engineering of the path."

But in one of his cave explorations he nearly lost his life. Having wriggled through a hole in the cliffs into a cavern, he found himself unable to return. The tide was rising fast, and all the efforts of his companions to extricate him were in vain. "I said, in the best voice that I could command, that I must say 'good-bye;' but, if ever I passed a dreadful moment, it was that one," he writes. Then it suddenly occurred to the party without that he might be dragged through *naked*. And so the future bishop hastily divested himself of his garments, and "after a good scraping stood once more by their side."

But when he became curate of the little church of Trentishoe such pranks were given up. His eccentricity now was shown in his dress, which would have made the hair of a Ritualist stand on end. He describes himself as

“clad in a pair of Bedford cord knee-breeches of a yellow colour, continued below with yellow Sussex gaiters with brass buttons. Below these a stout pair of nail boots, four inches across the soles, and weighing fully four pounds. My upper garment an all-round short jerkin of black cloth, underneath which an ecclesiastical waistcoat, buttoning up at the side.” But, after all, it was a *sensible* dress, and, for a man who made such journeys as fell to the lot of Hannington, eminently more suitable than the long coat and well-cut inexpressibles wherewith our town friend loves to clothe his form ecclesiastical. “You’ve got fine legs, I see,” quoth Bishop Temple to him one day; “mind that you run about your parish.” And he did.

On one occasion, when he had undertaken the duty at Challacombe, he got lost in a fog. Finally, having enlisted the services of a guide, he reached the church—of course very late; in fact, he found the congregation discussing whether they had not better go home. He explained the matter to the clerk in a whisper. And this is all the sympathy he got: “Iss,” quoth the clerk, *not sotto voce*, but loud enough for all the congregation to hear, “we reckoned you was lost; but, now you be here, go and put on your surples and be short, for us all wants to get back to dinner.” So he put a surplice over his draggled raiment and gave it ‘short.’

And so James Hannington went on his way, kind-hearted, genial soul, as free with his purse as with his counsel, beloved by all. How often when struggling through the malaria-laden air of Equatorial Africa, racked with pain, must he have longed for the pure breezes of his moorland parish!

The new road from Martinhoe to the Hunters’ Inn at Heddon’s Mouth is not yet pleasant walking, and the cliff path that runs parallel with it, though at an elevation considerably lower, is far preferable. We will find our way

then across the rough fields, and drop down the great slopes to the grassy track that follows the edge of the cliff midway between the sky line and the sea. Once clear of the woods, the slopes are bare—the great downs soaring upwards to the fleeting clouds and sinking to the water as bald as an Exmoor steppe. Ere long we reach a rocky amphitheatre—a sudden recess or chine in the hills. Here, between beetling crags, half covered with moss and climbing plant, a waterfall tumbles to the path, and thence four hundred feet to the sea. It is of no great volume—none of these short-lived brooks *can* have much water—but the chasm is deep, the rocks rugged and lofty, and the effect, especially in the gloaming, as I first saw it, very grand and weird. A friend who accompanied me, and who knows the chasms of Yorkshire, compared it to Yoredale. This rift in the hills is known as Hollow Combe.

Sweeping out once more on to the face of the cliffs, the path winds onwards, now over grass, now across screes—a dangerous walk at night, for, once lose your balance, and you fall, or, rather, roll, many hundred feet, and then—annihilation. At one point we pass close to the brink, and look right down on the sea. There are many caves at the foot of these cliffs, and some are accessible by the zigzag path cut by Bishop Hannington between Hollow Brook Combe and Heddon's Mouth. But this path does not look tempting, and I cannot say that I should like to try such a descent.

And now a bold, rough ridge of rocks cuts the western sky line, sinking at a sharp angle to the sea—High Veer. The path is hewn through the upper end, and, as we pass through, almost without warning opens out the valley of Heddon's Mouth, thought, by more than one, to be the finest of the combes of North Devon. We look down upon the trout stream flashing seaward towards the bar of shingle which the sea has piled across its mouth, and

through which it must filter, save when a storm on the moors sends down a flood, when, for a brief space, the barrier gives way. An abandoned limekiln perched on the rocky bank overlooks the struggle between stream and sea, and, worn by age and the weather to picturesqueness, is like some old castle guarding the pass inland.

The valley is shut in by lofty hills. On the western side the stone-strewn slopes give to the scene an air of grand desolation. In the glare of mid-day the effect is not so imposing, but it is difficult to do justice to it at sunset. With the light at their back, the hills turn a deep blue purple, while the screes become a pinkish grey, and over all spreads a pale mist, so transparent as scarce to be mist at all. Up from the depths below come glints of light where, here and there, the Heddon curls back against a boulder, and the air is full of his voice, rising to this height in soft undertone.

But, even at mid-day, the glen is beautiful. And look at the colouring—that burning bush of gorse bursting forth from the arid stretch of stone—there is yellow, and pink, and grey. A few months distant, and the clump of heather on the edge of that fern brake will be in full bloom, and the bracken itself changing its tints beneath the breath of autumn—then will there be purple and gold. And everywhere in and out among the rocks are there bright green patches of moss and blades of grass.

But this mountain glen—for such it truly is—is not the only grand feature. Looking westward from High Veer the coast line is magnificent. For several miles what a range of downs sinks into the sea! Further away beyond Combe Martin Bay, hidden by the slope of the Little Hangman, are the broken crags of Watermouth, with its rock-bound coves, and the reefs of Rillage, near Ilfracombe. On the sky line a pale grey wall rises out of the sea, the *Herculea* of ancient writers—Lundy Island.

And now the path passes downwards almost to the bank of the river and through a wood to the Hunters' Inn, a picturesque thatched hostelry at the foot of wooded heights, in the fork where the main stream is joined by a brook coming down another deep valley from the cultivated country at the back of Trentishoe. Both streams are full of trout, so the Hunters' Inn is a favourite headquarters for fishermen. It is also much affected by "reading men," and the young man from Oxford may often be seen sunning himself on the seat in front, engaged in the perusal of some work which does not *look* a bit classical. But then they bind books oddly nowadays, and perhaps a yellow cover makes Plato or Thucydides more attractive, while, as everyone knows, it does not follow that because a book is in three volumes and has the purple label of Smith it is not sternly scholastic.

A road of true West Country steepness and stoniness climbs the western combe to Trentishoe Church and what there is of a hamlet—a farm and a cottage or two. The church, although on such high ground, is well sheltered by still higher land behind, as well as by a grove of ash trees which rise above the low tower. It is a tiny building with an Early English east window of three lights. Here, as at Martinhoe, the churchyard affords examples of primitive epitaphs, one of which, commencing

My lovely little Tommy,  
Thou was taken very soon,

has "angles" for "angels," and "nown" for "known."

But in spite of bad spelling—or perhaps *because* of it—people seem to live long at Trentishoe. On one gravestone we find that three people, all bearing the ancient and time-honoured patronymic of Jones, lived to be 89, 92, and 103 respectively. There is no doubt that people do live long in these peaceful out-of-the-way spots. A tourist once met an old man sobbing bitterly. "Why do you cry, my man?"

he asked. "Feyther hev a been beating me," blubbered the old fellow. "Father been beating you?" echoed the astonished wayfarer. "What on earth for?" "For throwing stones at gran'feyther," whined the veteran.

Although Trentishoe is high, we have not yet reached the top of the hill, nor is the sea yet visible. We must climb another two hundred feet before it again comes in sight. But as the road winds upward, an extensive view opens out, not only of the Channel on our right, but of the country at our back—over down and field and fallow to the hills of Exmoor. Ahead rises a dark tract of heather, the barren height of Holdstone Down, the highest land between Exmoor and the western sea. When we reach the shallow depression that separates it from Trentishoe Common, we leave the road and once more betake ourselves to the coast.

Holdstone Down is about eleven hundred feet above the sea. One or two ruinous barrows mark the summit. There are tumuli, too, on Trentishoe Down. No wonder that the mighty ones of the past chose these vast seaward hills looking towards the setting sun as a last resting-place! Here, long after the valleys were in shadow, would the beams of light touch the bare mounds with golden shafts. They had some romance, these Celtic savages, after all.

From these ancient graves the eye rests upon surroundings of grim desolation. Not a blade of grass has climbed thus far; heather is the only plant that holds its own, and even that indifferently, for it is blasted and scrubby, and does not even conceal the bleached stones that strew the surface in all directions. The view is, of course, very wide, though blocked, a little to the westward, by the great mass of the Hangman, a rival hill of nearly equal elevation.

The Hangman is separated from Holdstone Down by the deep ravine of Sherracombe. Those who stick as close as possible to the coast will find the descent into this glen a very "gliddery" affair indeed, not to speak of the terrific

climb up the mountain wall opposite. The man with "bellows to mend" had better keep round the head, for, from past experience, I can assure him that a climb of a thousand feet over slippery grass, especially with the sun on your back, is as good a foretaste of the treadmill as anything I know. And at Holdstone Farm, the only house hereabouts, there is refreshment—humble, indeed, but of a sort that few will decline after the hot tramp from Woodabay. Indeed, talking of food, those who would fare delicately had better not come to North Devon. Between Heddon's Mouth and Combe Martin there is no inn whatever, and, though provision of some sort may be had at most of the farms, these are few and far between, and bread and cream is the staple "meat" and milk the staple drink. But to return. There is no doubt that those who go round the head of Sherracombe do not see the best of its scenery. For the glen, as it falls seaward, is wild and dark, and, like Heddon's Mouth, shut in by lofty steepes of moorland. An impetuous stream rushes down the bottom, not to meet the sea almost upon its own level, as does the Heddon—for the valley has not yet been worn down deep enough—but flinging itself over the cliff in a cascade seventy feet high.

Overhead, dark against the sky, towers the Great Hangman the loftiest seaward hill in the West of England. The climb to the summit, say, from the point where Sherracombe opens on to the sea, is nearly a thousand feet, for the Great Hangman is 1044 feet high. So it is mountaineering now with a vengeance. I have done some of the worst of the Lake mountains, I have done Ben Nevis, but I know nothing, except perhaps the screes of Rosset Ghyll, to equal the tremendous climb up the slippery slopes of the Great Hangman. The gradient is about one in two, and you will find it necessary to pause very frequently under colour of admiring the view over the ravine below.

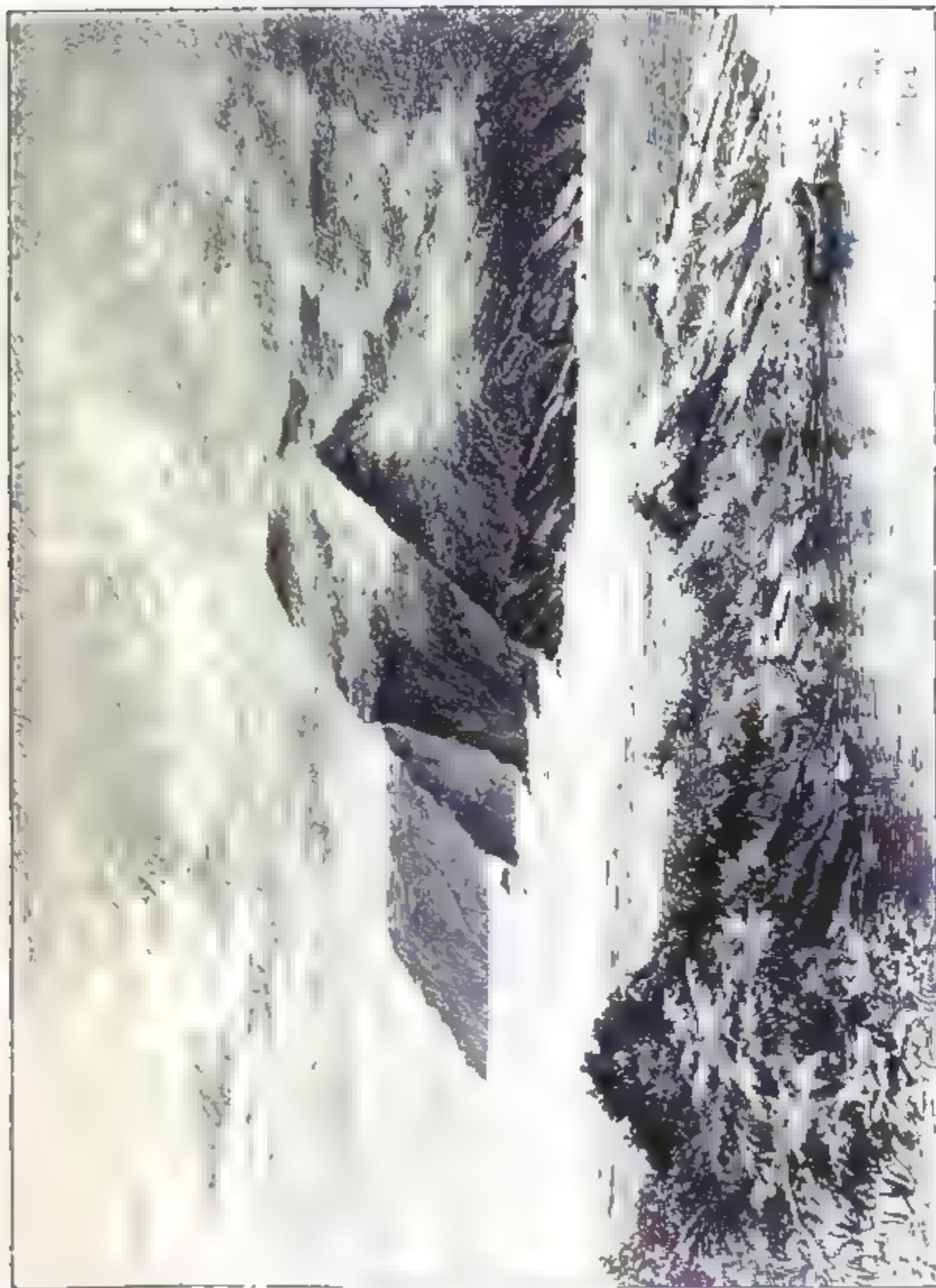


About three hundred feet from the summit an old mine track leads outwards and along the face past the chasm inside Blackstone Point to some adits tunnelled in the days when these hills were worked for silver, lead, iron, and copper. The first opening is a mere pit, but the second discloses the entrance to two passages or tunnels. The first, a steep and loose descent underground, dives into a short passage, which, turning sharp to the right, opens suddenly on the face of a precipice some seven hundred feet high. In the roof is a round hole which lets down a little light. The mineral was doubtless hauled up the shaft, the refuse being tipped into the sea below. The tunnel to the left passes into the hill for a distance of one hundred and fifty feet.

Beneath the track is an overgrown path running obliquely nearly to the edge of the cliff, where we come upon another tunnel, striking for about ninety feet in a direct line into the hill, and then branching to the left. Its greatest length, from the window-like opening in the cliff to the end, is one hundred and ten paces, or, say, three hundred and thirty feet. None of these passages are more than about three feet wide and about seven feet high.

Half a mile beyond—to the westward—a zigzag path descends a sloping part of the cliff to the beach. It is now used by people to collect driftwood and laver from the rocks. Laver, by the way, is a seaweed which is boiled and eaten very much in the same way as spinach, which in appearance it somewhat resembles. But in the old mining days this path had other uses, for about forty feet above the beach are two more caves. They have long been abandoned, and could never, one would think, have been very productive, for no cart could by any possibility have ascended the face of the cliff, and the mineral must have been carried up in baskets. A little further west a path, cut in the cliff, leads to another adit which has been filled up (apparently by a fall from the roof) just within the entrance.

This brow of the Hangman down to where the cliff sinks sheer is so steep that none but the surest-footed should attempt to scale it, far less descend direct from the summit to the adits. The slopes are covered thick with whortleberry bushes, the foliage of which in springtime is of a tender green dashed with pink, so that the Hangman, with its flanks of red and grey and brown rocks, and its verdant slopes, is a sight gracious as well as grand, and, when autumn comes, the summit will be crowned with a purple cap of heather. But, from the sea, one hardly notices the summit, so impressive is the great cliff scarped down to dark Blackstone Beach. On this mighty hill the clouds of Exmoor pause in their flight seaward; here strike the last rays of the sun as he sinks in the waves beyond the pale blue wall of Lundy. And here, too, for awhile, is the sea fog held in check, for, except Sherracombe, there are yet no valleys that it may choke with its dank breath, ere climbing, climbing, it reaches the summit. A fearful place this iron-bound coast, for no sandy shore is there to receive the wandering vessel lost in the mist. Happy the craft that grounds, before touching the cliffs, on some spot where there are no rocks. And one actually did come ashore, not many years since, under these very precipices. The fog rolled up from the Atlantic in dense masses, but fortunately the sea was calm. Had it been otherwise, little but a miracle could have saved the lives of the crew. Not a headland could be seen. Slowly the steamer forged ahead, feeling her way, as it were, through the grey mass. Suddenly the fog thickened. "A cloud," said the captain. But a voice rang from the invisible bows, "Land ahead!" and the steamer struck. The cloud was the Great Hangman. Fortunately the vessel had grounded on a patch of gravel, the only safe spot, as I was told, for miles. A few hours' waiting for the flowing tide, and she was afloat again. But what if the sea had risen?



THE GREAT AND LITTLE HANGMAN. FROM A SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR.

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The strange name of the hill is due, say the inhabitants of Combe Martin, to a still more strange accident. A sheep stealer passing over the hill, with his prey slung round his shoulders, paused to rest on a rock, when the sheep, in its struggles, tightened the cord, which, slipping round the man's neck, strangled him. The etymologist, however, says that Hangman is simply a corruption of the Celtic *An maen*, the stone, and treats the legend with scorn.

Standing by the cairn of stones placed on the very top, we look round on the widest view in North Devon. East and south-east Exmoor heaves in long swells. Over the cliffs is seen the summit of the Foreland. Nearer is High Veer, the beautiful sweep of the Trentishoe Cliffs, and the dark mass of Holdstone Down. Southwards the country undulates away to Dartmoor, which on a clear day is distinctly visible. In a westerly direction the coast may be traced to the Torrs, beneath which we catch a glimpse of Ilfracombe—beyond, on the horizon, lies Lundy. In the immediate foreground a hill rises from the sea into a conical summit. This is the Little Hangman to which we now descend over a desolate heath.

## CHAPTER V.

### COMBE MARTIN.

The Little Hangman—Yes Tor—Challacombe Farm—The Mines of Combe Martin—Wild Pear Beach—Combe Martin—Combe Martin Church—The Last of the Martins—Thomas Harding—A Quaint Festival.

THE wind blows fresh in our faces as we cross the dip between the Great Hangman and his lesser brother, whistling along the rough fences of turf and stone that divide the moorland from the fields that climb to the very brow of the hills.

Above the hollow the cone rises to a height of perhaps a hundred feet. Seaward, however, it falls seven hundred and sixteen in a slope that is so steep that I have never ventured down it, nor, so far as I am aware, has anyone else. Indeed, there is no object in thus tempting fate, for it is impossible to get at the water, the base of the hill being sheer precipice as straight as a wall.

This peaked hill is just the place for a "cliff castle," and there are indications near the summit that lead one to suppose that some sort of a fortification actually did crown the height. But the earthwork is now so low and weather-worn that little can be made of it. At one time, however, it must have been nearly impregnable.

I had imagined that there was but one Yes Tor in the world, and that in this county of Devon. But below us, to the right, is another Yes Tor, a sharp buttress of cliff sheltering the little cove on the eastern side of the hill. Why it is called Yes Tor I do not know. It is certainly as

unlike its Dartmoor namesake as possible, and boasts no more prominence than many another spot along this lofty line of precipice. The name of the Dartmoor mountain is supposed, and with good reason, to be a contraction of *Highest Tor*, but it hardly seems probable that such was the original name of the cliff beneath. However, there it is, and let those who delight in tracing the origin of place names fight out the question, if they list. There seems at one time to have been a path down to the cove, and a very precarious descent it must have been; but landslips have played havoc with it, and nothing but a goat, and that an active one, could reach the shore now. The name of the Dartmoor monarch, by the way, is the subject of a joke. "What is higher than *Yes Tor*?" a man once asked me. "Why, *No Tor*," and he laughed triumphantly. He looked rather sad, however, when I gently reminded him that a cruel Ordnance survey had recently given a pre-eminence of nine feet or thereabouts to the neighbouring boss of High Willhays.

The lofty line of downs extending from Sherracombe to the entrance of the bay below—of which the Little Hangman forms the easternmost horn—shelters from northern blasts the deep green valley of Combe Martin. From the summit of the Little Hangman nearly its whole extent may be plainly seen—the long, straggling village, the lofty church tower, the rectory up the western hillside buried among trees. The descent is, of course, rapid, whether we take a footpath through the fields and down through the market gardens below, or follow the lane past West Challacombe Farm.

This farm is interesting. It is an ancient house, which, though now a homestead, has so many traces of bygone greatness, that it is evident that it was once of much higher estate. Look at the deep porch, pierced with loopholes for musketry, that must be as old as the days of Queen Bess at any rate! And look at the weathered

escutcheon of six quarterings in the gable overhead. It bears the arms of more than one family of note. Round it runs a motto, but, beyond one word which appears to be "Prouz" (the name, by the way, of a race that once held Gedleigh Castle on the borders of Dartmoor), it is too worn to be legible. The inner arch, opening into the hall, dates, it would seem, from the sixteenth century, and the dark oaken door is ornamented with carvings in high relief, representing a male and a female figure, on their heads queer coronets full of fruit and flowers. These carvings are evidently of later date than the door, to which they have been attached, and look like specimens of the debased art of the next century. The back of the door is strengthened with cross-pieces, and the sockets for the great wooden bar still remain in the walls on either side.

The hall, which was small, is now so cut up into living rooms, that it is difficult to make out its real proportions. But, from a passage upstairs, we can see an oak roof. This roof is open, the divisions between the supports being filled with roughly carved arches lying flat against the tiles. The length was, apparently, about forty feet, the breadth sixteen.

The history of this old place is quite unknown, and about it the local records are altogether silent. But it has been suggested that it may have been the house of the Warden or Governor of the Mines, which were once of considerable importance, and were worked at intervals from the time of Edward the First to the present century—indeed, *tin* mining appears to have been carried on here much earlier, though, as Westcott says, "of the first finding and working thereof there are no certain records remaining." The semi-fortified appearance of the surroundings certainly gives some colour to the idea that West Challacombe was no ordinary house. What is now the farmyard—probably the old courtyard—is surrounded by lofty walls, and the pillars of masonry, on which we may presume the outer gates were hung, at the



top of the approach from Combe Martin, are very massive. But the house itself is now a weather-beaten hill farm, and the stranger might pass within gunshot of its walls and notice little or nothing to show its former greatness.

These mines of Combe Martin—particularly those producing silver lead—were, as I have said, of no little importance. The first notice we have of them is in the thirteenth century, when King Edward the First brought 360 men\* from the Peak District of Derbyshire to work them. In those days a man's surname was often determined by the place of his abode, and Jack o' the Peak and Dick o' the Peak have left their mark at Combe Martin. Families bearing the name of Peak still live in the district.

In the twenty-second year of King Edward, one William Wymondham accounted for 270 pounds weight of silver for Eleanor, Duchess of Barr, the King's daughter. In the following year 522 pounds were accounted for, and two years later no less than 704 pounds were delivered in London. In a letter to Dr. Cruwys, of Cruwys Morchard, Dibdin, who travelled through North Devon about a hundred years ago, writes : " In the years 1293, 1294, and 1295 were extracted, whether from a mine or different mines, no less than fifteen hundred *weight*† of silver, and I am confidently told that the fact may be relied on." In the twenty-fifth year of the same reign, 260 more miners were brought from the Peak and from Wales, and, according to Camden, Combe Martin silver helped to pay the cost of the French wars in the reigns of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth. They are heard of again in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who is said to have imported men from the Hartz Mountains. The new lode which led to all this activity was discovered by Adrian Gilbert, and afterwards worked by Sir Bevis Bulmer, who presented the Queen with a handsome silver cup, weighing, it is said, 137 ounces. This cup, which the

\* The Lysons say 337 men.

† Probably a mistake for *pounds*.

Queen afterwards presented to William Bouchier, Earl of Bath, then lord of the manor, bore the following inscription :

In Martin's Combe long lay I hid,  
 Obscure, depress'd with grossest soyl,  
 Debased much with mixed lead  
 Till Bulmer came, whose skill and toyl  
 Refined me so pure and clean,  
 As rycher nowhere else is seen,  
 And adding yet a further grace,  
 By fashion he did enable  
 Me worthy for to take a place—  
 To serve at any prince's table ;  
 Combe Martin gave the ore alone,  
 Bulmer the fining and fashion.

Anno { Nostræ Redemptionis 1593  
 { Reginæ Virginis 35.

Vero Nobilissimo Willhelmo, Comiti Bathon., Locum-tenenti Devonizæ et Exon.

Nor was this the only cup made at this time from Combe Martin silver. Another was given to the Lord Mayor of London—oddly enough his name was Martin, and possibly he was descended from the ancient lords of the manor, the Martins, Barons of Barnstaple. This cup is still used at the Mansion House banquets. The inscription bears some resemblance to that upon the other.

When water-workes in Broken-Wharff  
 At first erected were  
 And Beavis Bulmer by his art  
 The waters 'gan to rear ;  
 Dispersed I in earth did lye,  
 Since alle beginning olde,  
 In place called Coombe, where Martin long  
 Had hid me in his mold.  
 I did no service on the earth ;  
 Nor no man sate me free,  
 Till Bulmer by his skill and change  
 Did frame me this to be.

Anno { Nostræ Redemptionis 1593  
 { Reginæ Virginis 35.

Ricardo Martino, Militi, iterum Majori sive vice secunda, civitatis, London.\*

\* Prince's "Worthies of Devon," edition 1810.

"The allusion to 'Water-workes in Broken Wharff,' writes the author of the chapter on Combe Martin in a local guide book,\* evidently has reference to those erected for supplying London with water in 1582. They were the invention of one Peter Morris, described in old archives as 'a Dutchman, but a free denizen,' and were set in motion by the action of the tide flowing through the first arch of London Bridge. As Sir Beavis Bulmer was an engineer of considerable ability, it is possible that his connection with the waterworks mentioned in the lines quoted was in the way of perfecting the Dutchman's invention."

I have seen a letter, now in the possession of Mr. Incledon Webber, of Braunton, written by Charles the First to one of Mr Webber's ancestors, in which mention is made of the Combe Martin mines, which were then worked by Thomas Bushell, of whom we shall hear more, by-and-by, as Governor of Lundy Island. Historically, this is the last that we hear of them. Still, they have been worked from time to time with varying success, but want of capital has prevented their proper development, and although mineral has been raised, even within the last fifty years, the mines are now altogether neglected. The ore was found generally amidst a mixture of slate, sandstone, calciferous and porphyritic rock. There were only two mines—I do not, of course, include the adits and levels about the Hangman—and the levels ran beneath the village itself, a drainage adit passing under the hotel to the sea. A smelting furnace was erected in 1845 at the valley mouth, where plates of silver weighing 1200 and 1800 ounces have been produced. But the yield varied greatly, ranging from 20 to 168 ounces of metal per ton of the ore.

Still it seems possible that with proper management something might be made out of mining at Combe Martin. I understand that there is plenty of silver (though, as a rule,

\* "Guide to Ilfracombe and North Devon." Edited by W. Walters.

at a great depth), but that, through mismanagement and ignorance, the best places have not always been selected for working it. One of the last of the miners told me that there were lodes beneath the bay, close inshore, and not more than three or four feet from the surface, and that a quantity still remains unworked at Knap Down. I am the last to wish that this pleasant valley should be honeycombed with mine shafts or made hideous with chimney stacks, but one must not be selfish, and, although I must say that I should deplore the change, the argument that urges the greatest good of the greatest number *will* make itself heard, and if Combe Martin does become a mining district I shall try my best to "smile and look pleasant!"

Silver was not the only product of Combe Martin. There were mines of iron ore and copper as well. The chimney stack of the last to close, that on Knap Down, forms a conspicuous object on the hill over against Challacombe Farm, and may be seen for many miles. I believe that from this particular mine silver lead was raised, but this mineral was never so plentiful as iron, which was abundant, "over nine thousand tons being shipped to South Wales between 1796 and 1802." Another industry which sprung out of the mining expired with it. This was the cultivation of hemp, said to have been introduced about the end of the sixteenth century by some Spaniards who had come over to work the mines.\*

From Challacombe we may descend into Combe Martin by the lane, or take the longer but more interesting route over the cliffs. We will choose the latter, and return to the coast on the inner side of the Little Hangman.

What a lovely scene it is, this bay fringed by its walls of broken cliff! The sandy cove below—the first sand we have seen since we left Lee Bay—is called Wild Pear Beach. Here the cliffs are patched with underwood, including some hawthorn bushes, which perhaps account

\* "Archæology of North Devon."

for its name, for I remember that when I was a boy we always called the bright red berries which succeed the May blossom "birds' pears."

A zigzag path leads down to a ruinous limekiln and cottage—most of the limekilns along this coast are now in ruins. Compared to the quantity formerly used, lime is little employed in agriculture nowadays, but evil-smelling chemicals instead, and what is required for building purposes is burnt in places less isolated—in Combe Martin itself, for instance, where there are several kilns, and where a good deal of the lime used for building at Ilfracombe and Woolacombe is manufactured.

The cliffs running round the western end of Wild Pear Beach, which are pierced with more mining levels, end in Lester Point, within which is the cove that forms the head of Combe Martin Bay. Here, or hereabouts, there is a change in the geological formation. The sandstones locally known as "Hangman grits" dip suddenly beneath the slates, which, to use the words of Kingsley, are "fantastically bent and broken by primeval earthquake." You may see the change in the sharp slant of the rocks of the Little Hangman.

Crossing the fields inside Lester Point, we descend through some of the gardens for which Combe Martin is famous. It is the principal market garden of Ilfracombe, and so early are these sunny plots that I have seen peas a foot high at the end of March. The path drops to the harbour or, rather, cove—for there is no quay—and the foot of the long, straggling village street which stretches for a good mile up the valley.

Combe Martin (by the way, it is usually written as one word—Combmartin), like a good many other West Country villages, was once a borough and market town. But both its charter and its glory have been lost, and it ranks only as a village. In itself it can hardly be called picturesque, though it certainly does not deserve the name given it by

Kingsley—"the mile long manstye." A hundred years ago, perhaps, when the Combe Martin man and "the gentleman that pays the rint" lived in closer juxtaposition than they do now, it may have deserved the title, but Kingsley did not write a hundred years ago, and at the time he expressed this ungracious opinion Combe Martin had abolished the "lean-to" pigstyes which decorated most of its cottages. On either hand the hills fall to the valley—here smooth, green slopes, there wooded knolls; here a patch of moorland, there a copse. On the western side the country begins to break into those crested undulations that characterise the scenery all the way to Morte Point, and, though the peaked summits are of no great altitude, they are bold and picturesque. All along the bottom, watered by a brisk trout stream, are gardens galore, varied with orchards of apple, pear, plum, and cherry. In season, the wayfarer is beset by vendors of fruit, but let him not think that he will get it cheap, for nothing is cheap within six miles of Ilfracombe, the all-devouring. Still, they do a good trade, especially with passengers by the coaches, for those who can afford to pay coach fares are not careful to resist the temptation of purchasing one or more of the dainty maunds that are held up so enticingly. These fruit sellers mostly congregate about the King's Arms, an inn situated near the centre of the village, the queerest looking hostelry in the world. It is commonly known as the "Pack of Cards." Each storey is smaller than the one below, and the house certainly does look very much like one of those unsubstantial structures which we all delighted in raising when we were children.

But the principal feature of the valley is the tall tower of the church, rising over the elms, not far above the King's Head. It stands on a sunny slope on the bank of the stream against a background of green hills. As seen from the north this church is very striking, for the walls are

crowned with battlements, and there is a fine lofty porch, while the red stone gives an air of richness, and contrasts well with the ivy draping the walls. The tower, ninety-nine feet high, is built in four stages, and tapers considerably. At each angle of the battlements rise slender crocketed pinnacles, surmounted by small crosses. At the third stage the buttresses have niches, some of which are empty, but others contain figures. One of the niches on the south side has the effigies of some animal holding a shield bearing three lions passant. These, forming as they do part of the Royal arms, have led some to think that the tower was built by King Edward the First. But the style of architecture is later than his day, and I do not think the tower can have been built earlier than the year 1350.\* As Edward the Third was also interested in the product of the mines, it is possible that the escutcheon was placed there at his expense, and the period of his reign agrees, I think, with the date of the erection of the tower. On the western side is a representation of the Trinity—God the Father holding the Son crucified between His knees, while the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, hovers over the Saviour's breast. In another niche is St. Margaret slaying the Dragon. Over the west window is a figure of Christ holding a scroll sculptured with symbols of the Crucifixion. Most of the figures are too weathered for their identity to be determined; but, in the second stage, at the side of a window which has been partially destroyed to make room for it, is a niche containing a mutilated figure, which, from the vestments, is clearly that of a bishop. It is said to represent the patron saint—St. Peter.

In shape the church is cruciform. It consists of nave, chancel, north aisle with chapel, and another chapel on the

\* Mr. Buckle gives the western arch an earlier date, and calls it Norman. If so, this stage of the tower may be of earlier date. The arch strikes me as being *later* rather than earlier, and of a decided Perpendicular.

south. The chancel is Early English, with, for the size of the church, an unusually small east window of three lancets. There are two other lancets in the south wall, and a narrow priest's door. The north chapel, separated from the chancel by an oak screen thrown across a very wide Perpendicular arch, has some singular chestnut bench ends. Four of these bench ends finish with statuettes. There is a headless eagle, two other birds (so mutilated as to be unrecognisable), a dragon, and the four claws of some animal unknown.

Over the vestry door in the wall of this chapel, beneath a canopy of alabaster and marble, is a half-length figure of a lady, carved from a piece of white marble of the most spotless purity. This represents Judith Hancock, wife of William Hancock, some time *sercher* (searcher?) in the port of London. This lady, whose face must have been fair to look upon, died in 1637. The workmanship of the monument is unusually good—not only the lady's features, but the details of her dress, being wrought with the greatest delicacy.

These Hancocks were once lords of the manor. They came into possession in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when Sir John Pollard gave it to his servant William Hancock. One of the family—also named William—is commemorated by a small brass, dated 1587, where he is described as "*Gulielmus Hancock, generosus.*"

Both chancel and chapel are divided from the rest of the church by an oak screen of ten openings. This must have been a very handsome specimen, but it has been treated so badly that little carving is left, save the tracery filling the openings. The panels are filled in with rather rudely painted figures of saints—male and female. The cornice is a hideous plaster affair, the work of the churchwardens in 1672, and "their initials, J. P., T. H., still record their satisfaction in this astounding Vandalism."



There is the usual cradle or wagon roof, but the ribs are good and well preserved. The capitals of the pillars are carved with foliage. The octagonal font stands on a thick central stem surrounded by four slender columns. It is ornamented with Perpendicular tracery.

In the churchyard is an epitaph, which, in spite of its bad grammar, few of us would, I think, object to have as our own:

A friend so true there were but few  
And difficult to find,  
A man more just and true to trust  
There is but few behind.

What tribute could be more satisfactory?

A couplet on a tombstone which has no name, but is set at the foot of the grave belonging to the Ley family, to the west of the tower, is said to have been the one which is the subject of the oft-told tale of the irreverent wag. The verse, as I suppose everyone knows, runs:

Marvel not you standers by  
As you be now once was I  
As I be now so must you be  
Prepare for death and follow me

And this profane person scratched beneath:

To follow is not my intent  
Until I know which way you went.

This tombstone, which is evidently older than the larger one of the Leys, bears a device (which is seen, too, on several others) representing a hand grasping a bill-hook and cutting off a rose. Another stone records the death of Thomas Lovering at the age of 103. According to the sexton, this patriarch was reaping only two years before his death. Fancy any labourer working in the fields at 101 nowadays!

Another man of this name was buried with the following:

Here lies the body of—who d'ye think?  
Old John Lovering, he loved best drink,  
When he was living he was always dry  
And now he's dead, now let him lie.

The tombstone bearing this highly original effusion has, very properly, been removed. So has another which, not long since, stood at the head of a grave side by side with that of the Peake family :

Here lies my body all incomplete  
I should have lived longer if I'd had more meat,  
I died all in that very year  
That old John Peake was overseer.

This is hard enough—but imagine the deceased “pointing his moral” by being laid next door to his enemy !

There is nothing of much interest in Combe Martin village. A barn with a fine Jacobean entrance arch is all that is left of the Manor House. It stands back from the street on the right-hand side, a little above the turning which leads to the church.

Speaking of the Manor House reminds me that I have said nothing of the early lords—the people from whom Combe Martin gets the second part of its name. The combe is, of course, in pronunciation, if not in spelling, the Celtic Cwm, a valley—parent of all the combes in the West. But Martin comes from the Norman baron Martin de Tours, the Conqueror's grantee. This family (though no longer lords of the manor) still live in Devonshire, one of their descendants being the present vicar of Ilfracombe. They held considerable estates in the county, and were Barons of Barnstaple and Dartington, near Totnes. The legend told of the last of the Martins of Combe Martin is a sad one. This Martin lived in a moated house near the church. The moat was spanned by a drawbridge which was drawn up at night. One day his son went hunting, but the chase was a long one ; night fell, and he did not return. Thinking that the young man had accepted the hospitality of a fellow-huntsman, the father ordered the drawbridge to be drawn up as usual. Late at night the son returned, and not heeding, or not seeing, the position of the drawbridge, plunged headlong into the water, where the

corpses of himself and his horse were found on the following morning. Wild with grief and remorse at what he considered the result of his own carelessness, the poor father pulled down the house and left Combe Martin for ever.

Combe Martin has its "worthy." It is celebrated (or notorious, as the case may be) for having been the birth-place of that turncoat, Thomas Harding. Harding was born early in the sixteenth century, and educated at Barnstaple—at the same school as Bishop Jewel, whom he afterwards so bitterly opposed—at Winchester, and New College, Oxford, where he ultimately became Professor of Hebrew. On the death of Henry the Eighth he turned Protestant, and was rewarded with the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple. But his Protestantism was not proof against the terrors of "Bloody" Mary, and he again reverted to Romanism, becoming a prebend of Winchester, and Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral. On the accession of Elizabeth he found it advisable to leave the kingdom, and he died at Louvain in 1572. Harding's abilities were of a high order, "and," says Prince, "if his steadfastness in religion had been answerable to his eminent learning, he would have proved a much greater ornament to our country."

Until quite modern days Combe Martin was known for the celebration of a curious pseudo-historical festival or "revel," known as the "Hunting of the Earl of Rone." Two hundred and fifty years ago the hills and valleys at the back of the Hangman were far more inaccessible than they are to-day, and became an asylum for refugees who had got into trouble over the Irish Rebellion. One of these outlaws, calling himself the Earl of Tyrone, was captured in a wood near the village, and the Combe Martin folk, grateful for the removal of so dangerous a character from their midst, commemorated the event in the following manner: A week before Ascension Day the Earl of Rone, as he was called—

an extraordinary figure made out of a smock frock stuffed with straw, a string of biscuits round his neck, and, for face, a mask—was led through the village and neighbourhood in company with a hobby-horse and a donkey adorned with flowers. Everyone was expected to contribute a coin or two to the “soldiers” who escorted this extraordinary trio, and if anyone declined he was sprinkled with mud from a broom carried by a “fool,” or maltreated more or less by the hobby horse. On Ascension Day the Earl was taken to the wood where the real outlaw had been arrested and concealed among the bushes. Then the “soldiers” were supposed to discover him; he was dragged forth, placed on the donkey with his face to the tail, and conducted back to the village. Now and then the “soldiers” fired a volley, when the Earl would fall from his steed, the mob would cheer, and the hobby-horse and fool utter dismal cries. This sort of thing went on till evening, when the affair wound up on the beach. If the actors in this grotesque pageant had comported themselves with decency, the “Hunting of the Earl of Rone” might, perhaps, still be seen at Combe Martin, as the hobby-horse is at Minehead. But the rowdiness and drunkenness inseparable from such a function became unbearable. So the day came when the Earl was hunted for the last time, and in 1837 the show was suppressed.

But suppressed not altogether to the satisfaction of the inhabitants. One old lady told me with what an awful joy she would give her halfpenny to escape the jaws of the “mapper,” a terrific wooden affair worked by the hobby-horse, and which laid hold of any non-paying delinquent. She was really quite enthusiastic about this by-gone revel, and I shall never forget the unction with which the old creature finished her narration by exclaiming, in good old-fashioned Devonshire, “My dear soul, I should like to have ’un again!”

## CHAPTER VI.

### THROUGH BERRYNARBOR AND WATERMOUTH.

The "Castle" Earthwork—Sandy Way—Watermouth—Smallmouth Caves—Berrynarbor—Bishop Jewel—Manor House—A Healthy Place—"Dangerously Old"—Sloe Gin—Watermouth Harbour and Castle—Widmouth Head—Rillage Point—Interesting Rocks—Hele—Chambercombe—A Ghost Story.

"OUT of the world and into Combmartin."\* So runs the local saying. If the converse hold good, we get into the world when we leave that village. And yet there is not much sign of it for the next mile or two. Indeed, the coach road, after winding up a long ascent, seems rather to have left the world behind than to have entered it. With the exception of Watermouth Castle, there is hardly a house throughout the four miles that intervene between one of the largest of Devonshire villages and one of the pleasantest of Devonshire watering places—between Combe Martin and the outskirts of Ilfracombe.

The pedestrian may cut off the longest bend of the ascent by taking an old lane between it and the sea—a lane that was once the highway, but which no horse that valued its knees would care to descend nowadays. At the point where this lane rejoins the road and right overhead rises a steep knoll covered, except about the crown, with oak sapling and underwood. On the summit are the remains of an earthwork locally known as the Castle. The best way to get at this "camp" is through a gate a little further up

\* The local spelling. *Vide* p. 61.

the road, where it may be attacked in flank. Arrived on the summit, it will be found that the earthwork is, as usual, circular, and, therefore, in all probability of Celtic origin. It is some three hundred feet in circumference, with a bank about ten feet high on the outside, where it is protected by a ditch, though the height measured from within does not exceed four feet. To the east the hill is so precipitous that neither bank nor ditch was necessary. The entrance is to the south-west. Standing on the brow of this hill, we again have a panorama of Combe Martin Bay overlooked by the cone of the Little Hangman with its sloping ribs of rocks and wave-worn caverns.

Below the Castle a footpath and lane lead to the village of Berrynarbor, a pretty village a mile in from the sea. By taking this path, however, we turn our back on the coast, and this we cannot afford to do as the scenery is delicious. The high road hugs the cliffs closely, sometimes touching the very edge, and you look down through the bushes of blackthorn and bramble into the blue depths below. But the cliffs are no longer lofty. The high lands, so far as the coast is concerned, came to an end with Combe Martin Bay; we have left the massive downs with their faces of precipice, and from Combe Martin to Ilfracombe the seaboard is broken and irregular, with the exception of Hillsborough, seldom exceeding two hundred feet, sometimes even not reaching half that height.

But there is a great charm about this irregularity. Coves, and inlets, and fissures indent and scar the cliffs every few yards. Here there is a little bay, there a deep crevice, as though earthquake had been here and left its mark in the rock. And in all places where there is foothold does vegetation cling—vegetation of waving grass, of ivy, of "old man's beard," while higher up near the summit is wind-twisted sapling and thickets of briony and bramble and thorn. And how rich the colours of these cliffs!

There is a slate of grey satin, a slate of dark blue. There are crags with tints of brown and chrome and ochre. In short, this piece of coast is a feast of colour that must delight the eye of any artist, while at the same time he must despair of ever reproducing such manifold hues.

One wild little cove is Sandy Way, or Sandy Bay, as it is marked on the map. It lies immediately beneath the Castle, and is reached by a rough cart track which winds down a slope in part covered with thicket, in part with grass, and in springtime starred with primroses. At the bottom is a strip of gravelly beach with the usual foreshore of rock, and the base of the cliff at the western end is pierced with a small natural arch through which a man may wriggle at low water. There is another arch at the back of the cove. But this is an affair of masonry, erected to bridge a chasm in the cliff in the line of the track by which we just now descended. Once upon a time this track was used by limeburners for the carriage of pebbles from the shore, but, as I have said already, limestone now is generally dug further inland, so Sandy Way is deserted, and the sea has encroached on the track.

Another picturesque bay is Golden Cove, shut in between steep horns of rock, and with a capital beach for a dip, could you but get down to it. A little beyond, the road makes a sudden bend inland, and we leave it to pass through a wicket on to a path which keeps to the cliffs, passing through part of the park belonging to Watermouth Castle, the tower of which is presently seen rising above the trees.

From this path the view eastward of the Hangman Hills and Trentishoe Cliffs is magnificent. But the view in front—of the narrow rock-bound inlet of Watermouth, with its trout stream, green park-like slopes, and trees—is equally fine, if less grand. Away to the left opens out the pleasant valley of Berrynarbor, and there is a vista of steep wooded hills and pastures of liveliest green, until, far inland,

against the sky line the valley is closed by the high land of Berry Down.

At the foot of the slope the path skirts a narrow cove, or, rather, inlet, where the cliffs are mere slopes of slate only a few feet high. This is Smallmouth, and within a few yards of it, just where the peninsula which embraces land-locked Watermouth leaves the mainland, are two caves. Neither can be explored without the payment of a small fee, the approach being from the road close by, and, except at high tide, neither is accessible by boat, for the seaward entrances are guarded by rock and boulder. The westernmost, known as Briary Cave, is the more interesting. It is entered through a narrow aperture, and is lit by a wide shaft of light streaming down through an opening in the roof festooned with briar. Passing beneath this, you look through a dark arch of rock out to sea. The mouth is not easy to reach, for the floor of the cave is covered with a shallow pool left by the tide, which stretches from wall to wall. The other cave is chiefly famous for the view of Combe Martin Bay, the dark roof and sides making a most effective frame for the delicately tinted downs and soft blue cliffs to the eastward.

And now, reaching again the high road, we will turn up the valley and pay a visit to Berrynarbor. The road follows the windings of the trout stream—a stream fringed with hazel and sparkling over many a tiny weir on its course through the green meadows. On either hand the hills rise wooded to the sky line, with here and there a lodge or cottage perched about the fringe. Presently the tower of Berrynarbor Church comes into view, standing on a slope to the left, and, as we turn the corner, the village itself appears climbing the hill beneath its shadow, and set among gardens and orchards.

Past a snug little inn and some ancient cottages the road winds upward to the church. In a few minutes we reach the



lych-gate standing high above the road at the top of a flight of steps. The church stands still higher, the graveyard sloping to the road.

As at Combe Martin, the eye is at once attracted by the fine proportions of the tower. It does not, however, taper like that of Combe Martin, nor is it as lofty, the height being but eighty feet. It looks, however, quite as high, and has the same number of stages. The architecture appears to be of the Decorated period, though the west window, which for a country church is unusually fine, and has four lights divided by a transom, is Perpendicular. In the third stage are four empty niches with canopies of delicate tracery, and the battlements are pierced by quatre-foils. The pinnacles, however, are small and insignificant.

The church consists of nave, chancel, and south aisle. In the north wall of the aisle is an early Norman arch opening into a chapel, now used as a vestry. Across it stretches an oak screen, given by Mrs. Bassett, of Watermouth Castle, who also gave the tower screen and restored the roof, tower, and belfry. The Norman arch is not the only indication that this chapel is the oldest part of the church. "One corner of the outside gable coping," says Mr. Ravenshaw, "is worked into a sort of billet moulding, which with the cross on the gable indicate alike early origin with the arch." There is also a large Norman font.

The chancel is Early English, the nave and aisle Perpendicular. The pillars are good, with foliated capitals, and in the one furthest west there are niches. Close to the pulpit there is a pretty modern brass of an angel holding a scroll with an inscription to the memory of the last Rector, the Rev. J. M. Hawker, Treasurer and Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral, who died in 1884. Within the altar rails, close to the piscina, is a tablet to the memory of Mary, daughter of George Westcott, "Pastor of this church," who died in 1648. The play upon "Marigold" is quaint.

This Mary-gold lo here doth shew  
 Marie worth gold lies neer below  
 Cut downe by death the fair'st gilt flowr  
 Flourish and fade doth in an howr  
 The MARYGOLD in sunshine spread  
 (When cloudie) clos'd doth bow the head  
 This orient plant retains the guise  
 With splendent SOL to set and rise  
 Eun soe this Virgin MARIE Rose  
 In life soon nipt in death fresh growes  
 With CHRIST her Lord shall rise againe  
 When shee shall shine more bright by farre  
 Than any twinckling radiant starre  
 For be assur'd that by death's dart  
 MARY enjoys the better part.

Beneath this the name of the deceased (the Christian name Latinised) is turned into an anagram thus :

MARIA WESTCOTT  
 MORS EVICTA TUTA

and, for colophon, there is a coloured marigold.

From the wording of the above one would have imagined that the deceased was a young girl. The tablet, however, shows that she had fulfilled the tale of the Psalmist. In other words, Mary Westcott died at the age of *seventy*, and can therefore scarcely be said to have been

In life soon nipt.

On the north wall of the chancel are monuments to the families of Berry and Narbor, from which families the parish is said to take its name. Westcote, however, says that the old lord of the manor was Nerbert de Berry, which afterwards became Berry de Nerbert.

A couplet on the tablet to John Bowden and Ann his wife, who died in 1766 and 1779 respectively, contains a conceit both quaint and pretty. This tablet is on the south wall, and the lines run :

My loving husband he leading me y<sup>e</sup> way  
 to this dark bed of dust I came and lay  
 Down softly by him here secur<sup>d</sup> from harm  
 We sweetly sleep as it were arm in arm.

In the vestry hangs a portrait of Bishop Jewel. This celebrated divine was born at Bowden Farm, at the upper end of the valley, in 1522. At the early age of thirteen young Jewel was sent to Merton College, Oxford, and four years later was elected a scholar of Corpus. One of the friends of Peter Martyr, the Professor of Divinity, he gave ear to the doctrines of the Reformers and became a Protestant. He won great renown as a preacher; but on the accession of Mary his religious opinions brought him into trouble, and he was expelled his college. Hearing that Bonner was on his track, he fled to the Continent, and took up his abode with Peter Martyr. But he failed to elude the vigilance of the Inquisition, and in a weak moment was persuaded to sign his name to certain Popish doctrines. His remorse for this denial was so great that he afterwards publicly recanted at Frankfort.

On the death of Mary he left his home at Zurich and returned to England. The reward for his fidelity to Protestantism was the Bishopric of Salisbury, and Elizabeth further selected him as one of the sixteen Reformers to dispute in her presence with the same number of Romanists on certain points at issue between them. The Queen had so high an opinion of his learning that she ordered a copy of his "Apology for the Church of England" to be placed in every church in the kingdom. This *Apology* became so celebrated that it was translated into several languages and "read and seriously considered at the Council of Trent." Jewel was the author of many other works, all "exquisitely learned," though none so famous as the *Apology*, which caused his name to be known all over Europe. It excited the ire of his neighbour Harding, but Jewel's dignified defence completely silenced his coarse diatribes. Except in the matter of his signature to the Popish doctrines, Jewel's conduct was above reproach, and even his enemies spoke of his life as "angelical." He died at Monkton Farleigh in 1571, and was buried in Salisbury Cathedral.

Below the western end of the church is the old Manor House, said to date from the days of Edward the Fourth. It has now sunk to the condition of a small farm, and, except the good stonework, the square-headed windows, and some oak panelling within, conveys little impression of its ancient greatness. At one time it appears to have boasted a quadrangular courtyard, and divers carvings and escutcheons decorated the walls. These, however, have been removed to Watermouth Castle, though there still remain over the windows the letters T. B. and F. B.—the initials, perhaps, of some members of the Berry family, who lived in the parish two hundred years ago. The ruins of other parts of the building give the place rather a melancholy look, and the surroundings of the church would certainly gain by their removal. There is a village tradition that treasure will be found beneath the walls.

Berrynarbor should be a healthy place. The late vicar, one of the pleasantest contributors to the pages of the “Transactions of the Devonshire Association,” says that when he first came there he asked whether there were any sick to be visited, and was told, in a tone of surprise, “Oh, no, sir; nobody is ever ill in Berrynarbor. There is an old man, to be sure, *over ninety*, who has taken lately to his bed, but there bain’t much the matter with him that I knows of.” “I thought to myself,” writes Mr. Hawker, “of the story of the Scotchman, who said to his doctor, ‘Ye pu’ a vara lang face, Doctor; d’ye think I’m dangerously ill?’ ‘Na, na,’ was the reply; ‘I don’t think ye’re dangerously ill, but I think ye’re dangerously *old!*’”

There is a pleasant walk from Berrynarbor to Ilfracombe besides that by the coach road. Up the hill on the other side of the valley, past an outlying portion of the village, a lane climbs steeply, and, passing over the ridge behind Watermouth Castle, descends still more abruptly to the hamlet of Hele. This lane is famous for its sloes, the

finest that I have ever seen—just the sort for that delectable liqueur known as “sloe gin.” By the way, the reader may like to know how we Devon folk make sloe gin. I present him (or her) with the recipe. Into an ordinary wine bottle put half a pound of sugar candy, and upon this pour about half a bottle of gin. Then drop in the sloes (puncturing each berry as you do so) until the gin rises within an inch of the cork. The bottle should be shaken daily for about a month, when the liquor may be strained off, and rebottled, or left according to taste. In my opinion the flavour is improved by leaving sloes and gin together.

But we are not going to Ilfracombe by this hilly lane to-day, and the time of sloes is not yet. In fact, the black-thorn is only just breaking into bloom. Let us return to the high road, which, sweeping round the hillside at the head of the cove, brings us to Watermouth Castle.

Of Watermouth “harbour” first. Someone has said that it is like a Scotch sea loch. The simile is a happy one, and it may be added that there are few Scotch sea lochs that are prettier. The low range of cliffs, nearly eaten through at Smallmouth, have here given ingress to the sea, forming a cove so perfectly land-locked, that when a storm is thundering without, the water within is smooth enough for a cockleshell. This natural breakwater is broken up into peaks and knolls and undulations. In spring the place is covered with primroses and wild hyacinth. Later, the brake fern uncurls its velvety fronds, and the little valleys of the peninsula are a mass of tender green. About midway stands a round tower, once a pigeon house. Beneath this, inside, on the very edge of the water, is a walled inclosure which looks like a place for dipping sheep—if they ever are dipped in salt water—but is really a tank, or pond, constructed by some former Lucullus of the Castle for the preservation of his oysters !

On the landward side a strip of wood rises to the road. But towards the west, protected by the bold bluff of Widmouth Head, the land falls away a little, and there comes a dip of grass land, sloping to a sandy bay—a mere nook, it is true, but when the tide is up, and it generally is at this end, the most delightful spot for a picnic.\* At the head of the “harbour”—as the cove is generally called—the stream that waters the valley of Berrynarbor forsakes the pastures, and, passing beneath a bridge, meanders over the shingle to its death in the salt water.

Watermouth, natural harbour though it be, is not much used as a haven. In the first place, it is private property ; in the second, there is no population, and consequently no trade. Thirdly, the entrance is very narrow, and crossed by a swinging tide. I have anything but a pleasant recollection of running for it once myself in an open boat, when things were looking nasty outside. But when we got within a few hundred yards of Widmouth Head, there was such a sea running that we feared being “pooped,” and, preferring Scylla to Charybdis, put out to sea again, and fought our way back to Ilfracombe as best we could. So there is barely enough shipping to give the cove an air of life. One or two little cutters, and perhaps a sloop lying up on the foreshore discharging coal into country carts for the Castle or Berrynarbor village.

The Castle stands on the slope above. It is an imposing battlemented mansion, and, owing mainly perhaps to the ivy and the buttressed wall that sinks from the terrace to the park, looks much older than it really is. Its age is a hundred years at the outside.

From the Castle the road rises again, and, passing at the back of Widmouth Head, gains the hill top, a yard or two short of which we shall pause for the last time to look at

\* The ground, however, is private, and permission should be sought at the Castle.

the panorama eastward. There is no better coign of vantage than this corner whence to enjoy—for it *is* enjoyment—the splendid lines, the massive stateliness, the aerial colouring of this the loftiest piece of coast in the South of England. Over the blue waters of Combe Martin Bay towers the Little Hangman, standing out sharp and clear against the paler tints of his great brother, with his tremendous precipices scarped as by the hand of a Titan to the “foam-laced margin” below. In gully and crevasse and furrow the cliffs of Trentishoe sweep to the eastward until the horizon is cut by the rugged edge of High Veer. Over Widmouth Head the gulls are wheeling in the afternoon sunlight, uttering their weird cries, and darting now and again at the dark ripple made by a “school” of fish passing up Channel.

A few yards onward quite another scene breaks upon the view. Here is the bold brow of Helesborough, or *Hillsborough* as it is always called, and, immediately behind it, Ilfracombe with its pier, its chapel-crowned peak, and long cluster of houses stretching mistily up the winding valley to the peaked range of the Torrs. At our feet, sloping down to the sea in broken glacis of grass and rock, is Rillage Point. Look at those great masses of rock—limestone and slate and shale—off the extremity! About them the water is never still, for Rillage not only projects into a tide race, but, for some reason which I cannot explain, seems to be specially subject to the onslaught of the rollers coming in from the Atlantic. When a stiff westerly gale is blowing it is a fine sight to watch the breakers spouting up these great sullen crags, falling back in cascades of foam.

Between this point and Widmouth Head lies the little rock-bound bay called Sampson's Cove. Here is Sampson's cave. Sampson appears to have been a smuggler, and the cave was his storehouse. It was in this cove that the

steamship *Alexandra* ran ashore two years ago. The passengers were, of course, much alarmed, but the danger proved practically *nil*. For the cliffs fall so sheer to the water, that a ladder placed against them from the steamer's deck enabled those on board to make an easy ascent to *terra firma*. And the vessel was so little injured that many did not even avail themselves of this mode of escape, but remained on board, and were eventually landed at Ilfracombe.

The rocks of this cove are very richly coloured, and a late resident at Ilfracombe, writing on the geology of the cliffs hereabouts, refers to a singular rock, which he names the Curtain Rock, "from its fancied resemblance to a richly laced velvet curtain." "The lace-like dressing," he says, "is due to numerous white quartz veins which intersect it vertically at regular distances, contrasting strongly with the dark rich brown of its furrowed face."\* There are minerals, too, in these cliffs, for "lead appears cropping out under the landslip in a reddish shaly matrix."

To the geologist, indeed, this part of the Devonshire coast is of no little interest. Many a specimen may be picked up by the man who knows how and where to use his hammer; and, for a few pence, the quarrymen (when there are any about) are only too glad to part with fossils that they have come upon in their excavations. In Sampson's Cove the boulders on the beach are full of *Tentaculites*, and in the beds are found the remains of fish. *Favosites cervicornis* lie in the limestones of Rillage and Widmouth Head, and the beds about the path leading down to Hagginton Beach, to the west of Rillage, contain every fossil form of the district, including "casts of that rare shell *Rensellæria*," this being the only locality in Great Britain in which it has been noticed.† I am not much of a geologist

\* So a rock off Rillage Point, ribbed with horizontal and vertical lines, is known as the *Bookcase Rock*.

† "Notes on the Geology of Ilfracombe," by a late Resident.



myself, and in names polysyllabic—not to say barbaric—take little delight. But those who are enthusiasts in the stony science, will, I think, enjoy themselves between Widmouth Head and Hillsborough.

A vague tradition says that at the lowest tides the remains of a "Roman house" may be seen at the western end of Sampson's Cove. I have never seen this remarkable ruin myself; nor can I hear of anyone who has. Indeed, it is puzzling to account for the presence of masonry—Roman or otherwise—in such a position.

With the majestic peak of Hillsborough towering overhead, the road winds down the face of Hagginton Hill to Hele. Hele lies at the mouth of the deep valley of Chambercombe, the lower part stretching along the left bank of a lively brook which enters the sea over the rocks and shingle of Hele Bay. In former days this hamlet had an ill reputation, and many were the charges of wrecking laid at the doors of its inhabitants. But it has mended its ways now, contenting itself with growing vegetables for Ilfracombe, and supplying trippers from that enterprising watering place with hot water and milk for their picnics. There is no church, but the school-room becomes on Sunday afternoon a mission chapel, served by the clergy of an Ilfracombe parish, or their representative.

For a long distance at the back of Hele the wooded valley of Chambercombe winds upwards among the hills. It is still a lovely valley, though the Ilfracombe builder is doing his best to ruin it, and, at the lower end, some rows of ghastly cottages are already putting the green meadows out of countenance. But the lane from Hele is still untouched, and by it we will once more leave the sea for awhile, and penetrate this characteristic Devonshire valley.

Chambercombe is a contraction of Champernowne Combe. The white gabled farmhouse that we see among the trees the other side of the stream was once the abode of this

ancient family, and, indeed, known as Champernownesheys. You enter the barton beneath an old tiled gateway like a lych-gate, and, once within the house, see that it is no building of modern days. Great beams cross the ceilings, and in a room upstairs there is a plaster cornice and the arms of Champernowne over the mantelpiece.

Of course such a place must have a legend, and, equally of course, such a legend must have different versions. The most matter-of-fact tale is as follows: One summer evening the farmer, smoking his pipe in the garden, fell to studying the roof of the house, which needed repairs. While considering which of the windows would most readily give access to the roof, he was puzzled at noticing, for the first time, a window for which he could not account. Calling to his men to bring tools, he hurried upstairs, and at once attacked the wall of the passage opposite the mysterious casement. In a few minutes the plaster gave way, and the farmer, creeping through the breach, found himself in a long, low room furnished with tables and chairs of ancient date, and hung with moth-eaten tapestry. But the object to which his attention was first attracted was a bed with close-drawn faded curtains. With trembling hand the farmer tore them aside and started back in horror, for before him lay a skeleton.

Such, in brief, is the legend of Chambercombe. Additions more or less picturesque—not to say improbable—have been made thereto, and one writer states that, when the farmer, gasping for air, flung open the window, “the garden was alive with ghastly forms; ill-shapen, unearthly, demon-like heads rose and fell with threatening gestures, and mopped and mowed at him from among the flowers.”

Now, I am always sorry to destroy or weaken a legend—they are vanishing quickly enough as it is before the cynicism and scepticism of this nineteenth century—but I have examined the “haunted room,” and this is what I

saw. No bed-chamber at all, but simply a loft or space in the sloping roof. There was no floor even, except of the roughest joists and the lath and plaster of the ceiling below, and certainly *no window*. There was, and still is, a breach in the wooden partition that divides this loft from the passage, but it is far too narrow to admit a man. Nor is entrance necessary, as the whole of the little chamber may be seen by the light of a candle thrust through the opening. The present tenant of the farm smiles at the ghost story, but says that there is reason enough to believe that the room was once the abiding place of *spirits*, but spirits of a different sort—in fact, it was a store-room for smuggled goods. Perhaps, after this, the other version will fall flat. Still, it *may* be true, and no one need swallow more than he wishes. It is said that a French vessel was once lured on shore by the wreckers of Hele, and that the only survivor was murdered in this chamber.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ILFRACOMBE.

Chambercombe — Trayne — Hillsborough — Rapparee Cove — Ilfracombe Harbour—Lantern Hill—History of Ilfracombe—The Town—The Capstone—Wildersmouth—Runnacleaves—The Torrs—Climate—Church—An Old Monument.

BUT a truce to these dark stories. For, whether true or not, they do not make a saunter in Chambercombe more cheerful, especially towards evening, when the heavy foliage at the head of the valley is dusky long before the sunset tints have faded from the dark crags of Hillsborough or the lighter rocks of the Capstone.

It is a sweet spot, and we appreciate it all the more because a mile or two inland the country is bald and bare. It is only along the coast, where these semi-moorland valleys "descend in grace," that we get these coombes.

And Chambercombe is not alone. At Comyn Farm, the next above the "haunted house," another valley forks to the left, which, at its upper end, is as pretty—even prettier—than Chambercombe. This is the Trayne Valley, and this also is watered by a brook. The lower end is overlooked on the one hand by the narrow wooded ridge that separates it from Chambercombe, on the other by steep slopes of pasture rising into round-headed hills and knolls. Among these is Trayne Farm, a rough little homestead commanding a pleasant view down the valley, with a, fortunately, distant prospect of some gaunt-looking houses built on the slope at the back of Hillsborough. And, if you can stand a

roughish scramble, you will do well to penetrate into the woodland scenes at the extreme head of the valley. You will find a glen as fine in its way as any in Devonshire, and the whole picture of fir and oak and elm, with the brook rushing over mossy rocks at the bottom of the narrow glen, is like one of the border valleys of Dartmoor. It is difficult to believe that Ilfracombe and the fashions are only three miles away.

And towards Ilfracombe we must now turn our steps. I do not think we can do better than make our way back to Chambercombe, and ascend the rocky way that goes up beneath the oaks to what was once a lane, but has now become a wide road with a row of artisans' cottages, a line of villas, a brand new chapel, and other signs of the march of "improvement." This will lead us again into the coach road at the extreme eastern end of the town, and, turning back a few yards towards Hele, we shall find a gate opening on to the path up Hillsborough.

Hillsborough, as its name would imply, was once fortified. It means the steep fortification. On the landward side were, and still may be traced, two lines of earthwork, the outer of some height. The space inclosed was not far short of twenty acres. But when these ramparts were thrown up, and by whom, no man knoweth.

Set by the side of the eastern cliffs, Hillsborough would be of small account, but coming, as it does, after a comparatively low range of cliffs, and towering high over the little land-locked harbour of Ilfracombe, it is a most imposing headland, and anywhere but within view of the Hangman would be considered a very lofty precipice indeed. And it is certainly not the least graceful among the headlands of North Devon. In form, if not in elevation, it is a true mountain, the ridge rising in broken edges of rock and turf to a peak, from which the cliff sinks nearly perpendicularly four hundred and forty-seven feet to the sea.

And the sides are nearly as precipitous as the face—you can look right down on Hele Bay with its green water and shelving reefs, upon Rillage with its eternal line of foam, upon Chambercombe with its woods and meadows. And eastward you may see again the Hangman Hills, Holdstone Down, and Trentishoe Cliffs, and even the top of the Foreland, softer than ever in the haze that is born of distance. On the other side is Ilfracombe. It lies so immediately beneath that almost every house is visible. There is the little harbour with its quaint chapel crowning the rock above; there the Capstone Hill and the breezy Torrs, rising one above the other towards the sweep of Slade Down westward. In the winding valley between these hills and the sea, and along the northern slopes, lies the town, a jumble of old and new (the new, however, predominating), with the slate spire of the church of SS. Philip and James rising above the housetops at the back of the harbour.

But it is not only the outline of Hillsborough which is pleasing to the eye. The colouring is more pleasing still. The mixed character of its formation—the shales, slates, limestone grits, and sandstone—gives it a richness of hue which few cliffs along this northern coast can show. The blues, reds, browns, and greys blend with one another as softly as do the colours of the ever-changing sea below. And every nook and cranny is filled with vegetation. Ivy, convolvulus, and grasses grow everywhere, mingled with the pink sea thrift and white campion.

On the eastern side there is little rock. The hill is covered with greensward and bracken. Here, between the battery belonging to the Artillery Volunteers and Hele, is a curious cave. It looks almost natural, but is really the result of quarrying. The quarrymen of past days, in excavating under the hill for limestone, have worked according to the strike of the strata—that is, at a sharp

angle upwards. The result is a wide, low cavern, with a sloping roof supported by massive pillars of natural rock.

Nor is this the only cave under Hillsborough. The waves have worn many another hollow in the cliffs, and at one point, facing Ilfracombe, there is a natural arch through which at high water it is possible to row a boat, though the passage is not one to be recommended. Under the highest point is a gravelly beach, but this is very difficult of access, and bathers must go to Rapparee Cove, a land-locked inlet, where the cliffs fall away towards the harbour. The privilege, like most others in Ilfracombe, has to be paid for, but the game in this case is certainly worth the candle, for there are few pleasanter spots for a plunge. The name, as well as that of the old Combe Martin revel of "Earl of Rone" is to be traced up to the great Irish Rebellion of 1598.\* In Rapparee Cove drove ashore one of the prizes taken by Lord Rodney in an engagement with the French and Spanish.† She became a total wreck, and for some years the skulls of the prisoners and some of the treasure in the shape of coins were picked up on the beach. It is said that many of these skulls were those of negroes, so that the engagement must have been that of 1782, when Rodney defeated the Comte de Grasse. It was for this achievement that he was raised to the peerage.

The harbour of Ilfracombe is a cove beneath walls of rock mantled with underwood and ivy. So sheltered is it that within the stone arm of the inner pier the water is like that of a millpond, and the strongest gale that ever blew could scarce ruffle its surface. In stormy weather it is, indeed, the principal harbour of refuge this end of the

\* Mrs. Slade King, "The Olden Times of Ilfracombe." (Trans. Dev. Ass. vol. x.)

† Mrs. Slade King now says: "A Bristol ship with slaves aboard," and adds that the bodies of the poor negroes were refused Christian burial, and that their skulls are "at times turned up in the neighbouring fields."

Bristol Channel. It is only, however, adapted for small craft, and seldom shelters vessels of more than two or three hundred tons at the outside.

The stone pier was built by the Bouchiers, Earls of Bath, lords of the "royal" manor, which was at the eastern end of the town. In 1760 it was rebuilt and enlarged by their descendant Sir Bouchier Wrey, and again enlarged by Sir Bouchier Palk Wrey. All which facts may be read on a tablet in the wall at the end, where the Bouchiers are described as "vice-admirals of this place."

The outer harbour has no such pier, and depends for protection on the natural walls of Hillsborough. But round the rocks has been built a wooden promenade pier in the shape of a half hexagon, where the excursion steamers come in, and where promenaders may disport themselves. This pier was also built by the Wreys. The piles are said to be subject to the ravages of the *Teredo navalis*, a worm that takes delight in boring minute holes. But even this provoking creature has its uses, although the proprietors of the Ilfracombe Pier may be slow to recognise them. When Brunel was engaged upon the Thames Tunnel, he was much exercised as to the best kind of boring machine. But as he stood in one of our dockyards he noticed some creature with a peculiar arrangement about its head boring steadily into a piece of timber. "Eureka!" said Brunel; "you are the fellow for me." It was the *Teredo navalis*, and a *Teredo navalis*, or something very like it, in steel, did the great engineer make, and so the tunnel was bored. Even a nuisance like this may form a useful object lesson.

Lantern Hill is a conical peak of slate about a hundred feet high. On the summit stands the little building "where seven hundred years ago our West Country forefathers used to go to pray St. Nicholas for deliverance from shipwreck—a method lovingly regretted by some as a 'pious idea of



the ages of faith.'"<sup>\*</sup> On the top of the western gable a rather feeble lantern gives the hill its name and a modicum of light to shipping entering the harbour. This lighthouse on Lantern Hill is an affair of no modern date. It is mentioned in Bishop Voysey's "Register" as long ago as 1522. "*In capella S. Nicholai super Portum Ville de Ilfracombe fundata, luminare quoddam singulis annis per totam hiemem nocturnis temporibus in summitate dicte capelle ardens, velut stella nocte coruscans invenitur*"—which, for those who do not understand Latin, may be thus interpreted: "On the chapel of St. Nicholas above the harbour of the town of Ilfracombe a light like a star shining in the night is found year by year throughout the winter burning on the top of the said chapel."

The Bishop states that it eminently contributed to the preservation of human life by guiding vessels in the midst of storms and tempests into a port of safety, and, as the means of the inhabitants were insufficient to continue the maintenance of such light for the public good, his lordship invites the faithful to assist by offering to all true penitents an indulgence of forty days: "*Qui ad dicti Luminis sustentationum manus porrexerint adjutrices.*"

The chapel was one of four attached to the Church of Holy Trinity. There was one at Westercombe of the same dedication as the church, another at West Hagginton, between Hele and Berrynarbor, dedicated to Our Lady. The third, dedicated to St. Wendreda, was at Lee, which, though still within the parish of Ilfracombe, has now a district church of its own. With the exception of that of St. Nicholas, all the chapels have disappeared, though "Chapel Cottage" at Lee still perpetuates the name of one of these ancient sanctuaries.

Buffeted by the winter storms, lashed by the winter spray, patched, like Nelson's *Victory*, till little of the original

\* CHARLES KINGSLEY ("Prose Idylls").

fabric seems left, it is difficult to determine the age of this queer old building on Lantern Hill. Kingsley boldly gives it an age of seven centuries at least, but the little blocked up lancet in the western wall does not look as if it dated earlier than the fourteenth century. Against the wall near the north-western corner is a three-sided buttress-like piece of masonry. On the top of this was no doubt the ancient lantern, and the marks of the framework of the cage, or window, that contained it are still plainly to be seen against the wall above the masonry. There is nothing ecclesiastical about it now, not even the windows, which are like those of a house. The place is empty, and deserted by all but the man who sees to the light, and he only visits it for a few moments at night, or occasionally, perhaps, to hoist the storm cone on the flagstaff hard by.

If you look within you will see a room furnished with a deal table, and bare whitewashed walls, unrelieved by picture or even chart—a room empty and dismal. It is only the exterior that is picturesque. Part of this ivy has claimed for its own, and the rocky slopes have been planted with flowers. Looking at the harbour below with its handful of coasters, no one would imagine that in bygone times Ilfracombe was a port of some renown, and that, while Liverpool sent only one ship to swell the fleet collected by Edward the Third against France, this little North Devon haven sent six! In those days the population must have consisted almost entirely of sailors living in houses clustering about the mouth of the valley. Here are nearly all the old houses of Ilfracombe. The western end of the town is, for the most part, new, and, even in recent years, little more than a single street wound along the hillside down to the sea. Now its importance is the importance of a rising watering place rather than that of a port; lines of terraces stretch along the slopes, and look down upon the harbour; hotels

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ILFRACOMBE FROM RILLAGE. FROM A SKETCH BY  
THE AUTHOR.

and lodging houses are everywhere, and the clumsy vessel of the fourteenth century is succeeded by the swift excursion steamer.

But ancient as some of the houses about this pier undoubtedly are, there is little of the picturesque about them. Your mariner does not, as a rule, indulge in much decoration, and, possibly because he gets so much of it at sea, he prefers when on land to take the fresh air in small quantities, and usually pokes himself away in some obscure alley smelling strongly of fish and tar. There are many such alleys and passages at the back of Ilfracombe Harbour, though they will not be there long. The "improver" is at work, and street widening, hotel building, and other signs of the march of the nineteenth century are slowly but surely relegating these ancient tenements to oblivion. Nor can one altogether regret it. Fresh air, pure water, and good drainage are blessings not to be sneered at, and, although our ancestors appear to have got along sufficiently well with very little of either of the blessings first named, and were perfectly indifferent to the last, there is no doubt that epidemics were much more prevalent than we have any idea of. There were no sanitary authorities in those days, nor local papers either to publish outbreaks of disease, or to keep the said authorities up to the mark. Consequently, if a small plague broke out nobody knew anything about it, or, if they did, nobody cared.

We next hear of the importance of the place in the days of Elizabeth. It is customary to assume that the port of those days was Bideford, and the town on the Torridge did, no doubt, hold at that time a pre-eminent position among the ports of Devon. But when Ireland was disturbed by the rebellion which burst out towards the end of the sixteenth century, Ilfracombe was the place selected for the transport of the troops. And from Ilfracombe first came the news of the rebellion of 1601, when the Spaniards

landed at Kinsale under Don John D'Aquila, and at another place under the command of Alfonso Ocampo, only to be defeated with great slaughter by the deputy Lord Mountjoy. It came in for its share, too, of the Civil War, for in the autumn of 1644 it was taken by Sir Francis Doddington. In the parish church register, under date the 21st of August of that year, seven persons are named as "slain in fight twentieth day," and these were doubtless killed in the skirmish which then took place. A field called the Bloody Meadow, near the Runnacleaves, now built over, is pointed out as the scene of the conflict.

In the summer of 1685 the town was disturbed by some refugees from Sedgemoor. One Colonel Wade, Ferguson, Monmouth's chaplain, and a party of Dragoons under the command of Captain Hewling made their way to Ilfracombe, which they fell upon so suddenly that they managed to secure a ship lying in the harbour before any force could be got together to oppose them. They set sail, but were driven ashore by a man-of-war somewhere near Combe Martin. Once more they escaped, but the hue and cry was raised, and Wade was taken at Brendon, near Lynton. Ferguson and Hewling were also captured. With unwonted magnanimity James pardoned both Wade and Ferguson, but Hewling was executed.

The last historical event in connection with Ilfracombe took place just a hundred years ago. The harbour was invaded by a Frenchman, which sunk the coasters and then sailed for the opposite coast of Pembroke. Here, through a ridiculous ruse, they came to dire grief. Lord Cawdor, having no time to send for troops, attired the miners in their wives' red flannel petticoats and spread them along the cliffs. Telescopes were not of such long ranges in those days. The Frenchmen fell into the trap, and, imagining that a large force was ready to receive them, incontinently surrendered without firing a shot.

From the pier the main street winds up the hillside, and follows the line of the hill facing the sea for the best part of a mile. It is a picturesque street in its way, the western end being filled in by the furzy slopes of Langleigh Cleeve and the broken lines of the Torrs. From this thoroughfare strike other and shorter streets, some of them very steep, and everywhere are mysterious passages that will remind the visitor from the country beyond the Tyne and Tweed of the "yards" and "wynds" of the North. Above and below this High Street are rows and rows of houses, those below, which follow the line of the road that runs down the bottom of the valley, being mostly lodgings, boarding establishments, and hotels. In fact, Ilfracombe is nothing if not devoted to its visitors, and every other house is a lodging house or private hotel.

Midway along the sea front rises the hill called the Capstone, the favourite promenade of the place. On the side facing the town it is covered with smooth turf, where sheep pasture, giving the hill quite a rural aspect, though they consort rather oddly with the long glass pavilion at the foot, and the stream of gaily dressed people thronging in and out listening to the strains of the band. This pavilion, known, by the way, to the irreverent as the "Cucumber Frame," is a kind of small winter garden or concert-room, and is the place where the visitor to Ilfracombe doth daily and nightly resort, especially nightly, for then does the shelter become a place of entertainment indeed, and there is singing and acting galore.

But to the Capstone. On the seaward side it falls steep to the water, yet not so steep but that grass grows all the way down to the rocks at its feet. Along the face of the hill, only a few feet above the clear green water, and following the lines of the coast from the back of "Compass Hill" to Wildersmouth, runs the Parade—one of the most beautiful sea walks in the kingdom. Nor is this the only promenade.

All over the hill paths wind in every direction; and it is quite easy to reach the watch-house and flagstaff of the coastguard on the summit, from which you will get a perfect panoramic view of the town and all its surroundings.

The drawback to Ilfracombe is want of beach. This is, to a certain extent, redeemed by Wildersmouth, a rock-bound cove at the western end of the Capstone, where there is a gravelly strand, the chosen haunt of children, who spend their time between getting their feet wet and watching delightedly—as do children of a larger growth—the villainies of that ruffian, Mr. Punch.

It is a picturesque spot, and, when a stiff north-wester is blowing, a wild one too. For to the left of the cove run out reefs of “sharks’ teeth,” jagged lines of dark slate, their points always inclining, as if in defiance, towards the breakers. Over these the seas hurl themselves in masses of foam, and great flakes of spindrift fly wildly inland, bespattering the windows up the hill-sides with lumps as big as your fist. Then not even the overpowering presence of the big hotel that looks down upon the cove can take from the wildness of the cove.

Wildersmouth is simply the mouth of the Wilder, just as Heddons Mouth is the mouth of the Heddon, or Lynmouth the mouth of the Lyn. Among men “some are born great, some become great, and some have greatness thrust upon them.” So it is with the Wilder. It was neither born great nor has it become great; it has had greatness thrust upon it. This tiny stream, which is only three miles long at the outside, is dignified by the name of river. Why, even with the assistance of another Wilder—which comes down the Score Valley, a picturesque combe below the Branton road—it does not exceed six feet in width, and in summer, quite loses itself in the beach.



Beyond the hotel, which is by far the most imposing building in Ilfracombe, stretch the Runnacleaves, a broken line of cliffs pierced by tunnels conducting to bathing coves. Bathing ponds are made by walls of masonry built across from rock to rock. These are covered twice daily by the sea, so that bathers can disport themselves at any state of the tide.

Immediately beyond the bathing beaches are the Torrs, a range of hills gradually rising one above the other to a height of six hundred and fifteen feet above the sea. These Torrs protect from the north-westerly gales the upper end of the valley, along which stretch the villas and terraces of the more western part of the town. This Torrs Park, as it is called, with its green slopes and trees and villa gardens is certainly the prettiest part of Ilfracombe. The valley ends in a sort of *cul de sac* formed by the green wall of Langleigh Cleeve, which sweeps round the head of the combe seaward till it joins the wave-like undulations of the Torrs.

"You can live as long as you like in Combe, but you must go somewhere else to die." Such is the local proverb, and the tombstones in the churchyard certainly show that, if the people of Ilfracombe are not immortal, many of them live to an age far beyond that usually allotted to man. The three score and ten of the Psalmist, even four score, are thought nothing of—witness the list of centenarians on the slate slabs at the eastern end of the church. Four of them are over 100, one is 107. Whether their latter years are "labour and sorrow" history sayeth not. At any rate, here is the record of their age, and, as the stones could hardly have been set up without ecclesiastical sanction, we may, I suppose, take the years recorded upon them to be correct.

Therefore Ilfracombe should be a very healthy place—and such it claims to be. You have certainly a choice of

climates. For along the sea front, where the houses face northward and westward, the air is fresh and bracing, while in the sheltered Torrs Park, with its southern aspect, the climate is as mild as that of many watering places along the southern seaboard. At the foot of the hills again—say at the back of the Capstone—the air has elements both mild and exhilarating. So you can get almost any climate you like. Happy Ilfracombe!

Old as the town undoubtedly is, there is, with the exception of the Chapel of St. Nicholas, only one very old building in Ilfracombe. This is the parish church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, a large and interesting building on the hill-side over against the Torrs, which sweep round the northern end of the valley in a fine semicircle. It has every style of architecture from Norman to late Perpendicular, the Norman period being represented by the font, now so restored that it might have been made yesterday, and by the grey stone columns and arches of the nave, the Decorated by the chancel, while the remainder of the church, except the tower, is Perpendicular.

The aisles are of equal length with the nave and chancel, a feature very common in Devonshire churches, and which, though it adds to the size of the building, rather detracts from their dignity. But the chancel of this church has been further shorn of its honours. For whereas it once had three bays it now has but two, the third bay having been thrown into the nave. The portion of the roof—which is of the usual wagon build—beyond this bay is richly coloured and decorated. Beneath it was the screen, of which no vestige remains.

To go more into detail, it will be noticed that the Norman columns of the nave, which are said to date from early in the twelfth century, are very rough and unfinished. The pillars, octagonal in shape, are low and massive, and, beyond a narrow ridge from which the arches spring, have no

capitals whatever. Towards the eastern end these arches merge into Perpendicular ones of totally different stone, colour, and shape, giving the whole of the nave a strange unfinished appearance. The chancel was built in 1322 by order of Bishop Stapleton (who also caused twenty-four feet to be added to the nave and the aisles to be lengthened), but little of the architecture of this period is to be seen "except the aisles on the north side of the chancel and a single arch in the aisle near the tower."\* For, some years later, the building was again pulled to pieces and the Perpendicular style introduced largely. Other alterations have also been made, with the result that only one old window remains, and that very debased; it is in the north chancel aisle. The chancel was restored in 1861, and the tracery of the east window is quite new, though a revival of the original style—that is, Decorated. The south aisle has been rebuilt.

No traces remain of the rood screen, and the present parclose screens are quite modern. But there is an oak Jacobean pulpit and a fine old oak altar.

The most curious features of this church are the corbels in the nave—supposed to date from about the year 1300. They consist of hideous monsters carved in stone, upon whose shoulders stand wooden figures of angels. It is rare to find such exceptionally grotesque figures *within* the walls of a church, though they are often common enough *without*. It looks as if the gargoyles had come from their perches outside and invaded the sanctuary. A local writer suggests that they perform the double task of bearing against their will the fabric of the roof and the forms of the virtues as symbolised by the angelic figures.

Another peculiar feature is the position of the tower, which rises from the middle of the north aisle, which has

\* Rev. T. F. Ravenshaw (formerly curate), p. 93, "Arch. North Dev."

very evidently been built on to it. Opinions differ as to its age. One authority thinks it is Early English; another that the lowest of the three stages is Norman; a third that this lower part dates from a period anterior even to that, perhaps even anterior to Saxon times, and that, from the fact that it is "battered" as if to resist attack, it was once a fort or watch-tower existing long before the church was thought of. Of whatever periods the lower styles may be, the battlements and pinnacles are certainly Perpendicular.

For so large a church—it is a hundred and thirteen feet long by sixty-one wide—there are few important monuments. The most interesting are those to Captain Richard Bowen, who fell in Nelson's attack upon Teneriffe, erected by the Government; to the mother of Prince, author of the "Worthies of Devon"; and a tablet in the chancel, bearing a long and curious anagrammatic inscription to Charles and Grace Cutcliffe, who died in 1637 within a few days of each other. Another tablet in the north aisle bears a nearly illegible inscription recording the virtues of one Catharine Parminter, whose "Innocence and Prudence were so lovely that had you known her conversation you would have said she was the daughter of Eve before she eated of the apple." This paragon went to a better world in 1660.

A fourth monument worthy of notice is the heavy grey stone slab let into the wall behind the south door—a venerable piece of oak that looks as old as anything in the building. It is to the memory of Marie Selwood, who died in 1634. The inscription is raised, and begins by running round the edge of the stone, finishing down the middle.

In the churchyard, a few feet from the south wall, is the cover stone from the grave of some ecclesiastic, incised with the remains of a cross of which the head was once inclosed in a circle. It has been regarded as part of the

tomb of one of the Champernownes or Champernulfes, but the inscription as I read it, is

+ HENRI + DA . IE + GIT ICI DEV DEL ALME EI.  
MERC I\*

the point in the proper name representing a letter that looks like N or M, and that in the word EI of course being T, which has vanished in a fracture. This stone is supposed to date from the twelfth century.

\* Henry Da-ie lies here, God on his soul have mercy.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### MORTEHOE.

The Road to Lee—Over the Torrs—Cairn Top—Lee—Damage—John Cutcliffe—A Smugglers' Hole—Wreck of the *Leamington*—Bull Point—A Pleasant Musical Instrument—Rockham Bay—Mortehoe—A Doubtful Cromlech—Morty Well—Mortehoe Church—De Tracey.

THE country about Ilfracombe is very hilly—so hilly that legs unaccustomed to Devonshire will find their account in passing over the broken ground that heaves up in rocky ridges along the cliffs between Langleigh Cleeve and Morte. However, we have, or ought to have, Devonshire legs by this time, and, as Caleb Tucker says, in "Christowell," "Devonshire legs go up and down by power of habit without much strain." So let us set forth westward ho! right manfully.

There is not much road now. What there is is very rough because very unfrequented. Nowadays the main roads leave little to be desired, but some of these by-ways, especially near the coast, are in much the same state as were the turnpikes of a hundred years ago, the condition of which so excited the wrath of the traveller Dibdin.\* "The best horses in the world," he writes, "would be ruined by such roads; and whenever any but those accustomed to the country are brought there, the ostlers, by way of wit, look at their knees to see whether they are marked, as they call it, with the Devonshire arms." Dibdin, of course, referred

\* This is the author of the well-known sea songs. The quotation (as well as others later) is from a letter written by Dibdin to the Rev. Dr. Cruwys, of Cruwys Morchard, kindly lent me by George Cruwys, Esq., the present lord of the manor.

to carriage horses, and the roads he anathematised were, as I have said, the turnpikes, then, no doubt, kept disgracefully. But we have changed all that. No horse would be injured by any carriage road in North Devon now, and reproach has been taken away from many of the by-ways. So that one seldom sees "the wretched animals stretching their sinews and clambering like cats," and, if such a sight is seen, there is nothing "pitiabie" about it. The horse engaged in this acrobatic performance is a native and used to it. North Devon lanes were never meant for outsiders, far less for the "best horses in the world."

But, whether in a carriage or on your own legs, you cannot get out of Ilfracombe without climbing a hill—and a long one, too. Why, even the railway train has to get up some three hundred feet from Ilfracombe to Mortehoe, the next station, and Ilfracombe Station itself is three hundred feet above the town to begin with. The amphitheatre sweeps round the town, five, six, seven hundred feet high, not closely, but with ample space for air, and with a slope that is not always steep. And here and there is a combe which lets in the breeze when it is off the sea—which it generally is—with large freedom.

Being afoot, our road out of Ilfracombe is along the front of the Torrs. There is another way, it is true—up the steep and stony lane that lies in the hollow between Langleigh Cleeve and the westernmost of the Torrs. This those superior "carriage folk" may try if they list. I had almost added "and if they can," but, on reflection, I remember once meeting a "fly" in the narrow lane further on towards Lee, so it is evident that the Ilfracombe cabby does sometimes take his beast up Langleigh Lane. After all, a little persuasion goes a long way. "What! drive to Brighton in six hours?" exclaimed a London livery-stable keeper to two Frenchmen. "Vy not?" returned the Gauls, placidly; "ve've both got whips!"

You must pay, though, for the privilege of going upon these Torrs. Never was there such a place as Ilfracombe for tolls. You pay to bathe at Rapparee Cove, the only accessible bit of beach at the east end; you pay to bathe at the Tunnels, the only accessible bit at the west end. It is true you can scramble down beneath the Torrs, but here there is little or no privacy. Then you are mulcted for the pier and Lantern Hill, mulcted again to go upon the Torrs walks, and, "most unkindest cut of all" (which is good Shakspeare but bad grammar), mulcted again to go off. For the Torrs, alas! belong to different owners, and, while you may walk to within a short distance of the top for a penny, you may not reach that top, far less leave it, without being called upon to stand and deliver one penny more. However, grumble as we may, I suppose there is something to be said in favour of each and all of these tolls. They serve to keep out the commonest of the common trippers, so let us pay our oboli and be thankful.

There are seven summits, conical furze-clad knolls, rising one after the other like the crests of waves. Towards the land the slopes are pasture—where they have not been built upon—but the seaward face is pretty much as Dame Nature left it. All that man has done is to cut paths along the steeps—paths that wind up and through bracken, hawthorn, and other undergrowth, and now and again through parterres of primrose, wild hyacinth, and campion. "Old man's beard" hangs from the rocks, creepers straggle over the rough places, and here and there, though it is not very plentiful, are clumps of heather. Far below the sea breaks over the reefs, and casts its spray against the broken cliffs of slate. On the waters is a continual coming and going—the stately ship, its sails now white in the sun, now dark beneath a cloud shadow; the heavy coaster or Clovelly trawler with warm brown canvas, the useful but unpicturesque collier ploughing heavily onward, and the excursion steamer



crammed with holiday makers. The holiday maker—and we love him for it—does not haunt these Torrs as much as he might, considering their beauty. Considering, too, the attractions offered him upon the summit, for on the topmost peak is a large glass refreshment house surrounded by a bristling array of automatic machines—*vulgo*, “penny in the slots.” Even here is evidence of the inevitable cockneyfying which everywhere, nowadays, overtakes the fashionable watering place. Alas! and alas! Time was when these breezy heights knew not the cheap tripper, when glass houses did not exist, when automatic machines were undreamt of. But that time has passed away for evermore, unless, indeed, a new generation shall arise that knows not the cockney, that insists on relegating such monstrosities to a humbler position, where they shall neither spoil the scenery nor cry aloud “Here I am! if you want meat or drink—or packets of sweet stuff—or sunbaked cigarettes—or penny surprise packets—or sham jewellery, come, oh come to me!” But will that time ever arrive? I trow not.

Whether we like these traps for the tripper’s penny or no, we must pass them if we are to get on westward and pay our penny, too. For, if we escape the seductions of the gaily painted iron boxes, we cannot evade the toll. But now Cerberus is satisfied, and, as we stand upon the hill top by the gaily decked flagstaff, we are fain to confess that payment has not been made in vain. What a view it is! Ilfracombe fills the valley and climbs the slopes below. We look down upon the Capstone and Lantern Hill and the Harbour, even upon the brown and blue cliffs of Hillsborough and the foam-edged rocks of Rillage, while over all rises the bare brow of the Hangman and the faint undulations of Exmoor. To the south are the valleys of Score and Slade, separated by the wooded tor of Cairn Top, rising above the railway station. This rock-capped hill, not yet—*mirabile dictu*!—subject to toll, has a grim story. Here, it is said, a

Jew pedlar was murdered for the sake of his wares, though what he and particularly his pack were about on Cairn Top tradition does not relate. At the head of the Slade Valley, invisible from here, are the reservoirs, two picturesque sheets of water made by throwing dams across the narrowing valley.

Now look westward. The land descends towards the sea in slopes of green, broken and seamed and fissured, to the edge of the cliffs. So broken, so rugged is this coast line that scarcely two yards are alike; the sea has gnawed out creeks and coves and openings, some with a floor of bare rock, others strewn with sand or gravel or pebbles. There is one just beneath our feet—White Pebble Bay it is called, lying just within the embrace of that low green point that slopes so evenly seaward. This you may reach by steps cut in the cliff, and it is worth exploring, for the colouring is splendid. Then there is Brandy Cove, too—not so named without reason, I fear. In fact, but a few years since there were people still living who could tell you what sort of stuff the smugglers landed there. Further away the prospect is bounded by the rough ridges between Lee Bay and Mortehoe, the headland furthest west with the white lighthouse being Bull Point, while nearer and loftier now uprises on the sky line the long wall of Lundy.

Crossing a stile or two we get into the cart track that passes over the downs to Lee. In places it is hardly visible, so little is it used, and, except in the "season," the green turf is seldom trodden by any but the few folk that pass between Lee and Ilfracombe. But ere long the downs end, and we enter a long lane, a sort of survival or revival of the road, which has not one but many turnings before it drops, at an angle that no carriage person will be strong-minded enough to attempt, to Lee. For pedestrians there is a short cut across the fields near the top of this descent, and this we will take, for it leads to the upper part of the village and commands from the furzy brow whence it begins to zigzag downwards a full view of the valley.

A fold in the high, bleak ground over which climbs the railway—this is the commencement of the Lee Valley. But at once it falls rapidly seaward, till half a mile from the bay it is joined by the Borough Valley—a deep combe equally beautiful. Above the tree tops on the north side of this valley rock breaks forth in grey masses, while on the other a semi-moorland park slopes upwards to the sky line. About and above the junction of these combes lies Lee hamlet, and, with a cottage here and a cottage there, it straggles down to the sea in a purposeless kind of way, but which is indeed far more picturesque than the regulation street of the severely model village. There is a little church set under the eastern hill, built about sixty years since; a schoolhouse adjoining, an inn where you may feed on strawberries and cream, and just a handful of cottages before the stragglers begin, set among hedges of fuchsia and myrtle five or six feet high which you do not cut with a knife but prune with a hook. For this village is *lew*, as the Doone folk have it—that is, warm and sheltered—and in these gardens you can grow almost anything. Each combe has its brook, that which waters the Borough Valley being the largest. Above its junction with the smaller stream stands a handsome modern house, built in the Tudor style, the residence of a well-known writer on North Devon and its scenery.

Lee Bay is a rocky cove, bounded by shattered cliffs, the light tints of which are all the more noticeable because contrasted with the bright green and dark brown seaweed that covers the floor of the cove. At the head of the bay stands an old cottage, once a mill. But the wheel has been removed, and the millstream falls to the beach uninterrupted. Round the shore sweeps the road, separated only from the beach by a low wall, against which the waves break when the tide is high.

Passing a “tea house” or two we climb a steep hill overhung with trees. At the top the cliffs rise to a knoll

crowned by a mound and flagstaff, and from this point onward the coast line is closed, and the fields bristle with warnings to trespassers. Not that trespassing can do any harm. For most of the ground is barren enough; long ridges following one another trend seaward, rugged with ribs of rock and patched with gorse and heather. Between these ridges are wild combes, the largest being Warcombe, where, on the margin of the stream, the daffodils bloom abundantly.

Damage Farm, the weather-beaten old homestead on the slope at its head, is a very ancient place indeed, though I suppose that there is little left of the walls that sheltered worthy John Cutcliffe, one of the earliest of our Reformers. Cutcliffe, whose descendants are still lords of the manor, was born at Damage in 1340. He appears to have left his native land for France, and, being of a religious turn of mind became a Friar Minor, and later a Doctor of Divinity. After a while he saw the errors of the Romish Church, and joined the Reformers, with the result that he was thrown into Avignon Prison, from which he never came forth.

As I have said, I do not suppose that there is much left of the building within whose walls John Cutcliffe was born. Certainly none of it is to be identified. Time and the elements treat these hill farms roughly, and, although Damage Barton looks old enough, there is no fourteenth-century architecture recognisable. Rumour says that it has sheltered wilder spirits than good old Johannes de Rupecissa, as Cutcliffe was called, and that if stones had tongues they might tell many a yarn of smugglers and wreckers. These smugglers had a storehouse in the cliffs, a gunshot or two this side of Lee Bay—just below the flagstaff, in fact. Here in the brow of a peninsula, nearly eaten away from the neighbouring cliff, a small opening may be found. This leads into a hole about twelve feet by six, of irregular shape and sloping downwards. The

entrance is so narrow that a few bushes artistically arranged would have completely concealed it. Here the smugglers brought their tobacco, or lace, or whatever contraband of small compass they had a mind to conceal. I say of small compass advisedly, for the hole would have held very few kegs of spirits, not to speak of the difficulty of hauling anything heavy up the cliffs.

And tales of wrecks—happily wreckers are extinct—may still be heard round the fireside. For this corner about Morte is as dangerous as any part of the Bristol Channel, and before Bull Point Lighthouse was built, in 1879, wrecks were of frequent occurrence. The last disaster was the loss of the steamship *Leamington*, which went down with all hands off the mouth of Damage Valley, about four years ago. She foundered close to the shore, but a thunder-storm was raging at the time, and so dense was the darkness that the people on the cliffs could see nothing, although the cries of the drowning sailors rose high above the wild February gale. At low water her mast may still be seen a few feet below the surface.

Everywhere, except on the rocks themselves, the slopes of the combes between Lee and Bull Point are in spring-time gay with flowers. The ground, indeed, is perfectly blue with the wild hyacinth, and all along the boggy ground at the bottom of Warcombe primroses flourish exceedingly. Among them we one day found a species of polyanthus, or the primrose with several blossoms on one stem. Probably this was a *lusus naturæ*, and to what botanical name this plant may be entitled we knew not, neither, I am afraid, did we care. To the writer, indeed,

A primrose on the river's brim  
A yellow primrose is to him,  
And it is nothing more.

He is no botanist, and his descriptions of plants must necessarily be imperfect.

As we mount the brow of the combe the peak above Bull Point, which for awhile has been hidden, again comes into view. The lighthouse itself stands on a grassy plateau below, a hundred feet, perhaps, above sea level. It is short and sturdy, the lantern rising but a few feet above the houses of the keepers. But the sharp promontory on which it stands renders a loftier building unnecessary, and the light, which is a six-wick triple flash of great brilliancy, can be seen on both sides for many miles. On the western side, at a lower level, is a red light arranged to strike the water clear of the dreaded Morte Stone. The syren or foghorn attached to this lighthouse is worked by caloric engines, which drive compressed air through the syren with tremendous power, producing a blast sufficient, in ordinary weather, to warn any vessel between Bideford Bar and Ilfracombe. Even on land I have heard it plainly at a distance of four miles, bellowing like a distressed bull—indeed, Bull Point is no empty name for the headland that bears this useful but unmelodious trumpet.

For, however pleasant the foghorn may sound to the captain of some ship that has lost his bearings, there can be no doubt that it is very trying to the light-keepers. Fancy one of these “musical instruments” going night and day for twenty-four hours or so! Why, the hurly-burly must be enough to bring on the “dismals.”

And if it is objectionable on a shore lighthouse, where the men may, to a certain extent, avoid it, what must it be on some lonely pillar far out at sea? Indeed, it is said that some keepers can only be kept by giving them extra pay, while others are made positively ill, and have to be transferred to other places.\* However, necessity has no law, and a warning voice that can be heard ten miles away is not to be lightly entreated. But one pities the poor keepers.

\* *Manchester Evening News.*

The rocks of Bull Point, exposed as they are to the western gale, are torn and shattered in every direction, and the reefs are like saws. Between them at low tide the water lies in long pools—water of that clear green colour that we always find about these cliffs of slate.

A road bordered by telegraph posts connects the lighthouse with Mortehoe village. But this does not follow the coast, and our route lies along the curve of Rockham Bay, the bight between Bull Point and the long rocky spine that runs out towards the Morte Stone.

After so many miles of coast with nothing but small coves, this Rockham Bay seems quite large—it is a mile and a half across. As its name would imply, the foreshore is mostly rock, but a strip of sand has been washed up at the deepest part, which, where the cliffs are lowest, may be approached by a cart track over which the sand and seaweed are hauled for dressing the farms above. At the back the country is rugged and broken, for, although the combes between the ridges are cultivated, the ridges themselves lie bare, or are at the best covered with furze. But the lines are bold, and, when viewed from the sea, the whole district about Morte Point has a mountainous look, though the mountains are, of course, but miniature.

As we approach the heathery slopes of Morte Point, a combe deeper and more fertile looking than its fellows opens to view, and the house tops of Mortehoe are seen over the high ground above. A path winds upwards above the meadows, and we presently find ourselves once more upon a road and in the outskirts of the village.

The village stands at the base of the point, grouping picturesquely about the church, which, with its lych-gate, is raised a little above the street. It has rather a weather-beaten appearance this village, which, considering its position, is not surprising, for both east and west winds batter it, and it is frequently drenched with the fog

masses of the Atlantic. But the air is pure and bracing, and people are beginning to discover that there are worse places than "Morte," as the natives call it, for a holiday.

The grim meaning of Mortehoe at once stamps the nature of the adjacent coast. It means the Hill of Death,\* just as the Morte Stone, the dangerous rock off the extremity of the point, is the Stone or Rock of Death. According to Westcote, no man may move this rock unless he be master of his wife, which shows that Westcote, or, rather, popular tradition, recognises very unmistakably the power of the so-called "weaker vessel." Many, he goes on to say, have tried it, but without success, and it is thought that the feat will be performed by a stranger, though why a stranger should be more "master of his wife" than an Englishman it is difficult to explain. He slyly adds that some think a Russian would do, as they so habitually beat their wives that the latter do not consider themselves beloved unless chastised at least once a month! In connection with this remarkable feature in the domestic life of Russia, he relates the story of a Moscow goldsmith, who, being by birth a German, was not acquainted with this Tartaric (not to say barbaric) custom. The neglected wife twice sent him word that unless he beat her she would neither love him nor provide him with food. Whether this threat appealed to the heart or the stomach Westcote does not tell us, but the German rose to the occasion and cudgelled her so soundly that she gave him an excellent dinner.

Verily the saying—

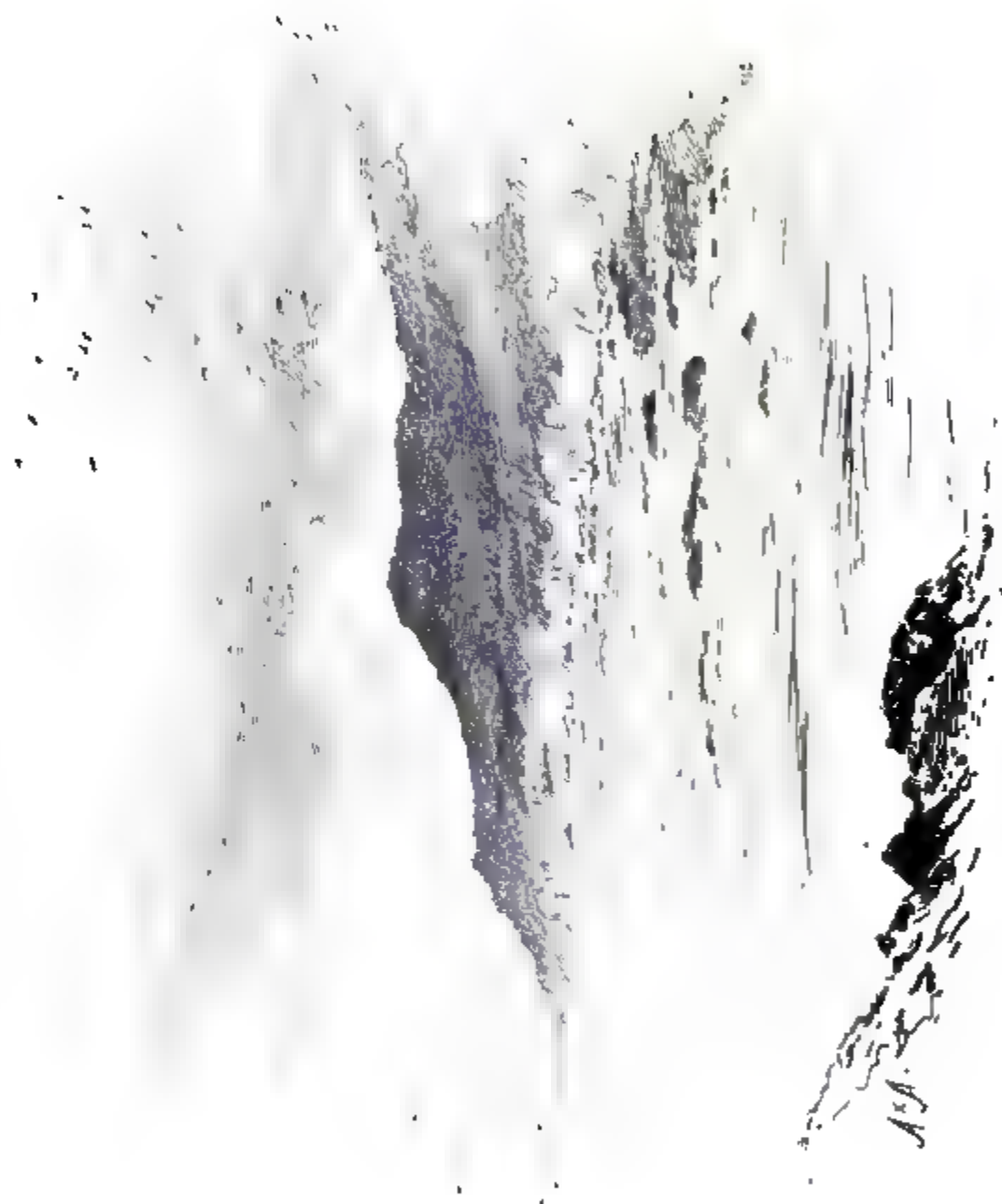
*A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree,  
The more you beat them the better they be—*

must be of Russian origin. Yet do I doubt that any Muscovite will move the Morte Stone.

\* Tugwell says: "*Mort* death, and *hoe* a projecting point of land."



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MORTE POINT.

It is a pity that there should be another version of the legend, and one diametrically opposed to that recorded by Westcote. For it is said that the rock can only be moved by a number of ladies, all of whom can rule their husbands. "If the story were true," writes another and more modern chronicler, "possibly the Morte Stone need not long remain a terror to mariners."\* Evidently this writer believes that the grey mare is the better horse.

Standing on the summit of one of the rough knolls, a strange wild scene lies below. Right down the centre of the promontory a jagged spine of slate rock runs brokenly to a sharp point almost level with the waves. On either hand the ground falls steep to the bays of Rockham and Woolacombe, the eastern side dark with heather, the western covered with turf and brakes of fern. Off the point a swift "race" rushes with the speed of a millstream, and, when the wind is against the tide, the sea between the land and the Morte Stone is a veritable Devil's cauldron. And so Morte Point, as might be expected, is held in but ill repute by the dwellers in Morte village. "It is the place," say they, "which God made last and the Devil will take first."

But the view from the Warren, the high ground at the landward end, is splendid. Here, at last, we have, almost uninterrupted, the rollers of the Atlantic, which swing slowly into the bay between the natural breakwater of Lundy and the blue precipices of Hartland. Below is the shining stretch of Woolacombe Sands, the finest beach in North Devon, bounded to the southward by the long cape called Baggy Point. The sea, of a deep green-blue, is dotted to-day with the sails of the "Bar Fleet"—the coasters of Bideford and Barnstaple—while in the distance

\* Tugwell, who says that there is some doubt whether the saying does not belong to a *menhir* on the high ground near Bull Point. This *menhir* I have never seen, nor, as far as I can gather, is its existence known in the neighbourhood.

a full-rigged ship, with all sail set, glides peacefully up channel, despising the offers of the tug that hovers restlessly in her wake.

There is said to be a cromlech on Morte Point. About a hundred yards from the brow of the Warren, immediately beneath one of the tors that crop up continually along the ridge, lies a large slab nine feet long, six feet wide, and two and a half thick. It rests on two other rocks, neither more than a foot in height, and of very irregular shape. To me the whole affair appears to be natural, the slab having slid down from the rock a few feet above and being arrested in its fall by rocks that had probably fallen in the same manner previously. And the "strike" of the rocks here would make such an occurrence quite likely. For they distinctly incline in a north-easterly direction, so that, in case of a fracture caused by weathering, they would fall to the right instead of to the left. Indeed, had the "cromlech" been on the Woolacombe side instead of on that facing Rockham Bay, it would have struck me at once as being the work of man. Another thing which militates against the "cromlech" idea is the extraordinary position in which the stones are found. Who ever heard of a monument of this description being placed just under an overhanging summit.

A hundred feet down the slope, in a direct line with the "cromlech," is a spring known as "Morty Well," the water of which was formerly (and is still, perhaps, to a certain extent) regarded with favour as beneficial to weak eyes. Whether the water actually has some strengthening properties, or whether its efficacy is pure fancy, I do not know. Superstition, however, is not yet dead at Morte. Witness the reason given for the loss of the *Leamington*. The crew numbered *thirteen*—so what could you expect?

A building low and dark is the church of Morte-hoe. It is said to have been founded in 1157, and the chancel may

be of about that date, as well as the rude Early English arches—if such they are—of the nave. The tower, or, at any rate, the lower part of it, seems to be Norman, for the door leading into it, as well as the north and south doors, are round headed. The church is rich in bench ends, and, as the old lady who showed us over (a remarkably intelligent specimen of her class) remarked, “no two are alike.” Here will be found the symbols of the Passion carved on shields—the nails, the spear, the hammer, the ladder for the descent, the garment, the thirty pieces of silver, besides divers grotesque animals, heads, and monograms.

In a chapel on the south is a monument that till lately was universally regarded as the tomb of the Tracey who assisted at the murder of that ambitious saint Thomas à Becket. We will discuss this point presently, merely premising that, as the figure incised on the top holds a chalice and is robed in priestly garb, the presumption that it is also the tomb of an assassin is one open to very grave doubt.

The figure is supposed to represent William de Tracey, Rector of Mortehoe, who founded a chantry chapel in the church dedicated to St. Margaret and St. Catherine, and served by its own priest. He died in 1322. Around the edge of the slab runs, or ran—for some of it is illegible—the words “Syr Wiliame de Tracey git ici, Deu del alme eyt mercy”—that is “Sir William de Tracey lies here, God on his soul have mercy.”\* On the north side of the tomb are carved the figures of the saints to whom the chantry was dedicated, together with three shields, one of them bearing the Tracey arms. The south side is ornamented with window tracery of the early Decorated period; on the west is a representation of the Crucifixion between the figures of the Virgin and St. John. The east side is plain.

\* Oliver's “*Monasticon Dioc. Exon.*”

There are all sorts of theories afloat about this monument. Some, indeed, say that it is not a tomb at all, but the altar of the chantry. These account for the presence of the incised figure by saying that the slab, though apparently of earlier date and certainly of different stone, was used for a top to the altar. Others have thought that the monument was not only a tomb, but a double tomb containing the bodies of the murderer as well as of his descendant the priest. There is an absurd tradition to the effect that the figures of SS. Margaret and Catherine represent the wife and daughter of the knight, and that by the latter he was nourished for a fortnight, when, immediately after the murder, he fled to Crookhorn Caves near Ilfracombe. There is some reason, at any rate, for supposing that he did return to these North Devon wilds, for the Traceys were Barons of Barnstaple, and lords of the adjacent manor of Wollocombe—now Woolacombe. But after the murder nothing prospered with them.

All the Traceys

Have the wind in their faces

soon became a common saying, originating in the unsuccessful attempts made by the murderer to reach the Holy Land, there to expiate his crime. It is said that time after time he was driven back by contrary winds, and finally died at Costanza in Italy.

What makes the whole matter more puzzling is that the slab seems to date from the twelfth century (when Becket was murdered) and the sides of the tomb, altar, or whatever it was, from the fourteenth, and therefore the figure can hardly be that of Sir William de Tracey,\* the founder of the chantry. But if the figure is that of the knight, how comes it that he is robed as a priest? There is a legend that Sir William de Tracey—for the knight had the same

\* The title does not help us, as priests were called *Sir* (Dominus) late into the sixteenth century.

name as the priest—returned from his exile and became a priest. Yet it seems improbable that a murderer, however penitent, could ever have been received into Holy Orders, and this has given rise to the idea that the inscription belongs to the knight and the figure to the priest—in short, over this monument surmise has run riot. An examination of the tomb when the church was restored in 1857 failed to clear up the mystery, for no bodies or traces of bodies were discovered. Indeed, the tomb appears to have been violated long before, for Risdon speaks of persons who had taken the lead wherein the dead was wrapped, and states that they never prospered after. Altogether, though the odds are against the monument being the tomb of an assassin, there is a possibility that the slab (in some other part of the church) covered his bones, and that the words referred to him and not to the priest, whose figure was added later. Whether or not the altar of the chantry was used as a tomb for the priest who had the chantry built, and the coffin-stone of his ancestor utilised *faute de mieux*, one cannot, I fear, determine. But for myself I like to think of the penitent knight coming back to the land of his forefathers, and finding a resting place in this church by the western sea.

A knight and yet a felon,  
He stood on the Rock of Death,  
And the waves of the wild Atlantic  
Were roaring and raging beneath.

The waves of the wild Atlantic  
Around him came rolling free,  
With the gathered might and the gathered weight  
Of a thousand leagues of sea.

From the stormy coast of Labrador,  
From the banks of Newfoundland,  
The west wind drove the breakers  
To break on that desolate strand,

\* \* \* \*

*Sir William de Tracey.*

The royal blood of England  
Was surging in his veins,  
But the mark on his brow was branded  
That was set of old upon Cain's.

And the howl of a people's hatred  
Followed, where'er he trod.  
He had slain a man at the altar,  
A priest in the house of God.

So he fled from the crowded city,  
From the face of man he fled,  
And sought in the western wilderness  
A home to lay his head.

Alone on the desolate headland,  
Or the barren sands of the bay,  
In penance and in fasting  
He wore his life away.

And the pitying neighbours laid him  
In the stately church he had built  
On the heights above the ocean  
To purge away his guilt.

A brief and a humble legend  
Was carved on a brazen scroll :  
" Here lies Sir William Tracy,  
God's mercy on his soul." \*

\* From a poem by A. H. A. H., "Western Antiquary," vol. ix., p. 83.



## CHAPTER IX.

### BETWEEN MORTE POINT AND BIDEFORD BAR.

Tasteless Architecture—Another Cromlech—Barricane Beach—Woolacombe—A Brig Ashore—Woolacombe Sands—Georgeham—Croyde—Croyde Bay—Baggy Point—A Dangerous Cave—Saunton Down—Saunton Court—A Boulder out of Place—Braunton Burrows—Mouth of the Torridge and Taw.

EVEN Morte-hoe, though two long miles from the railway, shows signs of growth. One or two large lodging houses (of course quite out of keeping with the surroundings) oppressively assert themselves, and as we descend the steep road towards Wollocombe—or Woolacombe, as it is always, though erroneously, called\*—we pass several more, including a hotel which for sheer ugliness leaves little to be desired. It is a thousand pities that in this land, of all lands, a little more taste should not be shown in domestic architecture. I suppose it would be an interference with the glorious privilege yclept the "liberty of the subject," not to speak of that still more tender point that Bulwer calls "the breeches pocket," but I would that the plans and elevations of every builder along this north coast of Devon could be passed or rejected (I think they would be generally rejected) by a joint committee of architects and artists who had an intimate knowledge of the scenery. Then perhaps we should not get stuccoed hotels perched on wild hillsides, or ferny combes disfigured by hideous villas of biscuit-coloured brick. But, asks the British tax-payer, "who is to pay the piper"? for of course such a committee would not give its services voluntarily. Alas! no—Utopia has not come yet. Let us get on.

\* So Morte-hoe (or Morthoe) is becoming Mor-thoe—and at its own railway station. The proper pronunciation is Morte-hoe, and this explains the name which, Mor-thoe does not.

At the bottom of the hill we reach Twitchen Combe. Right against the sky line on the southern brow rises a furzy knoll crowned with a curious pile of rocks that the Ordnance map calls a "cromlech." The pile certainly does bear some resemblance to one of these monuments, but, if the blocks constitute a cromlech at all, it is a very rough one indeed. Upon two masses of quartz rock rests a cover stone measuring five feet by three and a half, and about two feet thick. None of the blocks are shaped, but appear to have been dug out of the quartz reef or dyke which runs through the slate, and piled very much in the shape in which they were quarried. The "cromlech" is very low, the space between the bottom of the cover stone and the ground being barely large enough to shelter a sheep. The ground is rocky—indeed, the "cromlech" stands upon a ridge of slate, so that it is improbable that a hole was dug beneath it for purposes of interment. In a field nearly directly east, about a quarter of a mile over the brow, is a large block of similar rock about six feet in height, and of considerable girth. This may have been roughly shaped, as its appearance is different to that of other rocks in the vicinity. Perhaps it was a *menhir* and connected in some way with the cromlech—from which, however, it is not visible, nor has it been placed there by human agency, being plainly a natural mass, exposed, probably, by denudation.

Round Twitchen Combe winds the road, with Morte Point on our right and a rock-fringed bay below, till a mile below Morte village it sweeps past the head of a narrow inlet between the slate reefs, with a floor of what appears to be grey sand. But sand it is not. If we get down over the low cliffs to this Barricane Beach we shall find that the cove is strewn with shells, and shells only, though hardly one is entire. This is the only beach of its kind in Devonshire and why the shells should be washed up here more than elsewhere is a question that no one has yet

satisfactorily answered. Nor are they all common shells. Here you will find the bearded nerite, the elephant's tusk, the wentle trap, and the cylindrical dipper. Here the *Ianthina communis*, or blue snail, ends its long voyage, and here drifts ashore *Villula limbosa*, on which, according to Mr. Gosse, the *Ianthina* feeds. So Barricane Beach is a favourite haunt of conchological visitors, and it is a curious sight to see half a dozen people at once in attitudes the reverse of dignified searching for specimens.

Of course, such a spot is the very place for the vendors of refreshments. And, as a consequence, Barricane from June to October is hopelessly spoilt. Into the little cove are crowded three or four canvas booths with their attendant tables set out with terrible-looking shell-fish, cakes, ginger-beer bottles, and tea cups, while no wayfarer, be he peer or peasant, can go within a hundred yards of the place without being beset by women and children, who pester him with cards of invitation to their tea tables, or worry him to buy strings of shells. If you want to enjoy Barricane in peace go there when Ilfracombe is empty. There are many mild, sunny days in late autumn, even in winter, when the cove is almost as warm as at Midsummer. There are many days, too, neither mild nor sunny, but when Barricane Beach is still more worth visiting—when the north-wester sings through the grass overhead, and the sea spouts in cataracts over the sharp pinnacles of slate.

Round the corner is Wollocombe, or, as I suppose I must call it, Woolacombe. At some railway stations far away (they are not so foolish as to exhibit it at Morte-hoe or Ilfracombe) you will see a fancy picture of Woolacombe as it is to be in "the sweet bye and bye," evolved, apparently, from the inner consciousness of the architect—a wonderful watering place with hundreds of handsome villas stretching up the slopes, with pleasure boats crowding the shore, and even with jetties (I do not think the architect has yet soared

to a pier) for the accommodation of the same. At the *spot* you will see a hotel, an old farmhouse packed away behind it—as if the brand-new hotel were ashamed of the poor old place—a couple of terraces, a handful of villas, and—several thousand acres of turfy down and wind-swept pasture.

There *are*, you see, some houses, but as for the jetties and boats they exist only upon paper. For although Woolacombe has grown amazingly since I first saw this wonderful panoramic view some nine years ago—there was only the farm and one or two cottages then, and perhaps, though I am not sure, the hotel—no pier or jetty is ever likely to throw its shadow upon the shining sands, nor any boat beyond—significant fact—the lifeboat to lie below the long range of downs. For these seas at Woolacombe are tremendous; even in calm weather there is a surf—while in a storm

The riderless horses race to shore  
With thundering hoofs and shuddering roar,  
Blown manes uncurled.

The man who projects a pier at Woolacombe will do well to take warning by the fate of the pier at Westward Ho! which was, but is not.

For a brand-new watering place Woolacombe is not unpleasing. Some care has been taken about the style of architecture, and, in a few years, when Time has mellowed the red bricks of the terrace facing the sea, the houses with their tiled roof and balconies will be quite picturesque. The situation is open and airy, without being cold. For this latest watering place lies at the mouth of a wide combe sheltered on the north by the high land of Morte, on the east by the green downs, while it is open to the moist west wind, and the southern breezes are obstructed but little by the promontory of Baggy Point. The drawback is want of shade. Not a tree, not a shrub breaks the noonday glare, and, of a still day, Woolacombe is about the most glowing corner in North Devon. Fortunately, still days are rare.

There is almost always a breeze off the sea, and to sit and look at the long glittering line of breakers of itself almost makes you feel cool, and better bathing it would be difficult to find.

Woolacombe Sands are haunted by the ghost of De Tracey, the murderer. He is condemned to the Sisyphus-like task of making ropes of sand. On stormy nights he may be heard howling at his work. The manor of Woolacombe Tracey once belonged to the wretched man's family, and to this neighbourhood, according to Risdon, he withdrew himself, and "here he spent the remainder of his life, and lieth buried in an aisle of this (that is, Morte) church by him built, under an erected monument with his portraiture engraven on a grey marble stone." All which, as we have already shown, is as it may be.

And Woolacombe gave a name to that "ancient and gentile family" the Wollocombses of Wollocombe. Traces of one of their manor houses may still be seen by the Upper Barton. The other was close to the Lower Barton (the farm behind the hotel), and in these houses the Wollocombses lived many a year, "if in no great state, yet in great honour and consideration, intermarrying with all well-born neighbouring houses—the Bassetts of Umberleigh, the Coffins of Portledge, the Fortescues of Filleigh, and many more." But they have passed away, "the old family with its retinue and its honours is gone and well-nigh forgotten." . . . So sings the old poet :

The glories of our birth and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things;  
There is no armour against fate—  
Death lays his icy hand on kings.  
Sceptre and crown must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.\*

\* Rev. George Tugwell. Sermon on behalf of the new church at Wollocombe. (C. Seers, Bath.)

Woolacombe does not yet boast a stone church—though it does a stone *chapel*. The services are carried on in an iron church “up the road,” dedicated to St. Sabinus, who, according to tradition, or, may be, according to history, I know not, was wrecked on the sands below, long before the Wollocombs themselves were thought of.

Morte Bay—it is gradually getting called Woolacombe Bay—is a place shunned by sailors. What with tides and the shallowness of the water inshore, they dread getting “embayed.” Indeed, once aground, there is a poor chance of ever getting afloat again, and the combing seas will make short work of any vessel that is not stoutly built. In February of last year a French brig drove ashore here in a fog, and was aground for more than a month before they managed to float her. I remember well a walk over the cliffs to see the wreck in the frosty starlight of a March morning. The ground was like iron, and when we got upon Lee Down it was as much as we could do, to keep our feet. As we climbed out of Lee, dawn began to break over the eastern uplands, and lovely indeed was the effect as the grey-green light touched the hoar frost lying thick on the undulations that stretched away into the distance. Slowly the day grew, until, as we passed through Damage farmyard, the old building stood out dim and shadowy in the dawn, and the cows came placidly out of their shed, their breath rising like steam upon the cold air. But it was not till we reached Morte, nearly two hours from the time of starting, that objects became sharp and distinct. Here we met a couple of labourers going to their work, one with a lighted lantern—although it was broad daylight now—in his hand. We asked him if he were looking for an honest man. The rustic gaped vacantly and made no reply, but some minutes later when we were far up the village he recovered himself and shouted—“We be all honest volk to Morte,” and burst into a loud guffaw at his own wit.

Going down over the hill the scene was impressive. The bay lay a sheet of glass, heaving ever and anon as some roller larger than his fellows passed inward with march solemn, irresistible. Over Baggy Point hung the moon desperately fighting the sun, as, inch by inch, he crept nearer the crest of the hill. A ghastly reflection stretched across the water, and just within it lay the ugly black form of a tug straining hard at a cable attached to the stranded vessel. As we drew nearer we could see the poor old thing rise slowly to the breakers and then sink heavily back into the bed she had rolled for herself in the sand. Nearer still a strange weird sound smote upon our ears—the groaning of the strained timbers. Have you ever heard the death groan of a ship? It is a sad sound, that groan, as if the helpless vessel were endued with life, and that life were in agony. We stood by her till the sun flooded the beach with light, watching her vain efforts for freedom. But the tide turned, and the tug drew off and vanished in a blur of smoke round the Morte Stone.

Along the dunes at the foot of the hills the tawny sands stretch away to Baggy Point in a curve two miles long. There is good walking all the way, if you keep upon the damp sand, the dry stuff is poor going. At the Woolacombe end the little stream that waters the combe spreads itself over the shore, but is no hindrance, for most of it is absorbed long before it reaches salt water. At the southern end we pause and look back. What a long stretch it seems! And, beyond a little clump of rocks close inshore about the middle and a few more near the white cottages and limekiln near which we are standing, the expanse is unbroken. Look at the reflections in the wet sand below Woolacombe! They are a long way off, but how plainly you can see the inverted images of the bathing machines and of the children at their play! But what a glare! It scorches the face and burns the eyes until you

are thankful to rest them upon the green of the hills, or turn to climb the rough lane that leads over the base of Baggy to the shady villages of Georgeham and Croyde.

It is a typical Devonshire lane of the wilder sort, for, though too near the sea for branches to meet overhead, it is barely six feet wide at the bottom, and its banks are full of wild flowers. This lane branches at the top, the turn to the left going to Georgeham, that to the right dropping down the side of the valley to Croyde. Nearly abreast of them, by passing through a gate on the right, you will find a path leading out on to Baggy Point. We want to visit all these places; it is unfortunate that they lie in different directions. However, Georgeham lies the most inland, more than a mile, indeed, from the sea, so we will take that first.

Through the pretty hamlet of Putsborough with its old thatched house we get into a long lane that winds over the open country to the village. The land lies high and exposed, and the trees are few and far between. Away to the left a grove that shelters the long stone house of Pickwell is quite a feature in the landscape. On the western side they have a curiously shaven look, and slant upwards, as it were, from the ground. This is caused by the west wind, which often blows with great fury against these slopes at the back of Morte Bay. Very soon we lose sight of the sea altogether, and descend gently to Georgeham.

Georgeham—it is pronounced George Ham—fills in the head of the long valley that winds seaward between the uplands of Baggy and Saunton Down. It is a large, rambling place, and, being in a hollow, has plenty of timber. The church, indeed, as first seen, is almost hidden among the elms. It stands well on rising ground at the top of the village, the turret and battlements just clearing the trees. The architecture is Perpendicular, and the building has undergone a thorough, and we shall be glad to find, judicious restoration. In the chancel will be noticed a



handsome stone reredos, representing the Lord's Supper, and, in a recess on the north side of the altar, a rude and sadly mutilated relief of the Crucifixion, evidently one of the oldest things in the church. The marble panels in the pulpit illustrate the Sermon on the Mount, the preaching of John the Baptist; while a scene representing a man addressing Roman soldiers and savages is probably commemorative of St. George, to whom the church is dedicated.

In a chapel raised above the eastern end of the south aisle is the recumbent figure of a Crusader. This monument is in an unusually good state of preservation. Angels support the warrior's head, the crossed feet rest on dogs. It is said to be the effigy of Sir Mauger St. Aubyn, and to date from 1293, so the knight must have gone to the Holy Land with Prince Edward—afterwards Edward the First—on the last Crusade, a Crusade ever memorable for the self-devotion of his wife Eleanor, who, at the risk of her life, sucked the poison from the wound given by the envoy of the treacherous Emir of Jaffa.

The St. Aubyns were lords of Pickwell in Georgeham parish. This Sir Mauger seems to have been a man of great strength and stature, though the monument does not show him as of unusual height. Yet Risdon speaks of "a main stone there yet to be seen by him thrown a far distance" which "witnesseth the one, and the other his tomb in the church, having thereon his armed proportion larger than the ordinary stature of man."

Close by is a mural monument of very different order, and of the surpassing ugliness which usually characterises monuments erected in the days of the Stuarts. The painted inscription is too decayed to be legible, but it appears to be in honour of some member or relative of the well-known Devonshire family of Chichester. Over it are half a dozen medallion portraits in low relief.

In the churchyard, on the right-hand side as you leave, is the overgrown and nearly illegible headstone of Simon and Julia Gould, who lived together seventy-four years, and died at the age of 100—a venerable Darby and Joan indeed. Nor are they the only inhabitants of Georgeham who touched their “century.” Opposite is another grave (I forget the name), the occupant of which, according to the headstone, also reached fivescore. On this same side, right up against the wall of a cottage, are some old stones thrown aside. Among them is one to the memory of William Kidman, of H.M.S. Weazel, wrecked off Baggy Point in February, 1799. This vessel was stationed at Appledore, and one day, while cruising, struck on a sunken rock a mile from the point and foundered with all hands.

Close to the path is a stone to one John Hill, a sergeant in the 40th Regiment, “a Waterloo man and through the Peninsular War.” The verse at the end of the epitaph runs thus :

Nor cannon's roar nor rifle shot  
Can wake him in this peaceful spot ;  
With faith in Christ and trust in God  
The sergeant sleeps beneath this clod.

As for Croyde, it is blest more than most villages hereabouts, for it enjoys the grateful shade of timber at one end, and the sea breezes at the other. The upper end of the village is made up of an irregular street of old-fashioned whitewashed cottages, some of them thatched, and sweet with roses and honeysuckle. Tucked in among them is a pretty little modern church, a chapel-of-ease to Georgeham. The stream which we have followed in our walk down the valley from Georgeham ripples along the roadside and, barring a tin pot, a “chaney” crock, and one or two other unconsidered trifles, is a very pleasant accessory.

At the corner where you enter the village the inn and the post-office stand facing one another. The former is

remarkable for "The Landlord's Invitation," a card nailed on the wall facing the entrance, and bearing the following legend, which my readers may interpret as best they may :

Here's To Pands Pen  
Das Oci Al Hourin  
Ha ! R : M : Les Smir  
Thand Funlet  
Fri Ends Hipre :  
Ign Be Ju !  
Stand Kin  
Dan Devils  
Peak of No ! Ne !

Who, after reading this, shall say that Devonians lack originality?

Down by the sea is another hamlet, partly old and partly new—Croyde Bay. The new part consists of an imposing-looking coastguard station and a sprinkling of houses—mostly lodging houses—which lie along the slope at the base of what one of the villagers calls Baggy "Mountain." Croyde Bay is patronised by those who do not favour the racket of Ilfracombe or the glare of Woolacombe. It certainly is quietest of the quiet. The houses overlook a line of sandhills that stretch right across the mouth of the valley (which for the last mile has fallen nearly to a level) and a short stretch of beach. Over against Baggy Point which thrusts out a protecting arm to the north is Saunton Down, a high semi-moorland ridge, and the last headland for miles. For beyond it begins that extensive tract of sand dune and beach that does not end till Taw and Torridge are reached, flowing out towards the broken waters of the bar.

This Croyde Bay, if we may believe a shadowy legend that has, so far as I know, no written record at its back, was one of the landing places of the Norsemen. Their chieftains, say the legend, were Crida and Putta, the former of whom gave his name to Croyde, the latter to Putsborough.

At the back of Baggy Point is a spot to this day known as Bloody Hills, and here it is supposed the "heathen men" joined battle with the English.

But a race earlier than that of the Viking has left its marks in this corner of North Devon. Quantities of flint cores, celts, and arrow-heads have been turned up about Baggy Point, and occasionally fragments of ancient pottery; and it is thought either that the population in those days must have been considerable, or that a large depot or place for the manufacture of these primitive implements must have existed here.

I have said that there is a way of reaching Baggy Point by turning in through a gate near the top of the lane that comes up from Woolacombe Sands. But we have passed this now two miles or more, and it is a much pleasanter walk by the footpath from Croyde Bay than over the fences and other impedimenta of the route on the northern side. The only thing that can be said in favour of that route is that the scenery is much finer, while the cliffs that face Woolacombe Sands are double the height of those looking across Croyde Bay. Still, having traversed both routes, and my delight being no longer in acrobatics, we will take our way past the red house of the artist who dwells at the very end of the scattered line of houses, and follow the path that skirts the low shelving cliffs towards the extremity of the headland.

It is a long grassy down, this headland, smooth and free from rock—very unlike any promontory we have seen yet. Although it commands a wide view, it is not in itself very interesting—the interest lies beneath rather than upon the surface. For Baggy Point is honeycombed with caves. Two are inaccessible, except from the water, but the one nearest Croyde Bay, which is fine, and another at the foot of the zigzag at the extremity may be explored at low tide. But the one most difficult of access—and therefore

perhaps, considered the most interesting—is “Baggy Hole,” a long cave or passage at the north-eastern corner. This extends inland a great distance—in fact, a dog that was taken into it was next seen at *Barnstaple*!—and should be explored with caution, as candles have been known to go out, showing the existence of foul air. I have never met anyone who has penetrated to the end, though I know more than one who has explored the “hole” for some distance.

Except in very calm weather, with the wind from the east or south, the attempt cannot be made, and even then there is some risk, owing to the sudden, and very often unaccountable, rising of a ground sea. To get at the place over the cliffs is almost impossible, though I know one man who has done it with safety at low water of spring tides. But he had no time for more than a short visit before the tide turned, and he had to decamp hurriedly. Another daring visitor was caught, and spent four dreadful hours climbing the cliffs, cutting notches in the shale with his pocket knife!

Returning to Croyde Bay, we cross the stream that works a channel for itself through the sandhills by a plank, and skirt the base of Saunton Down. The cliffs here are mere banks, rising from a foreshore of long reefs that run some distance seaward. These low cliffs are much worn, the tide setting strongly across the bay. A wily old fellow in the neighbourhood noticed that a particularly strong current deposited drift wood and other flotsam in a certain cave. He kept his own counsel, and that cave turned out quite a little storehouse. Here he found divers useful pieces of wreckage, many a spar and coil of rope, once even coming across a fine new wheelbarrow but little the worse for being cast up by the sea.

From the summit of Saunton Down may be seen one of the finest views in Devon. At least Kingsley says so, and

if he did not know his native country assuredly nobody else does. It certainly is a fair panorama, whether you look back over the green fertile vale of Croyde, or forward over the tawny waste of Braunton Burrows, with its billows of sand, to the soft greys and purples of the cliffs of Clovelly and Hartland. And away over the slopes southward, blue with great patches of bugloss, the estuary of the Torridge winds inwards between the white houses of Instow and Appledore to the old town of Bideford, stretching up the hillside beneath its light pall of smoke, and, further still, to the woods of Annery, till the green hills beyond melt into the misty lines of Dartmoor.

Lying "lew" on the southern side is Saunton Court, the old house mentioned in Blackmore's "Maid of Sker." Like so many other houses in this western land, it was once of greater dignity—it is now a farm, a picturesque gabled building with a round, massive Jacobean archway to the porch, with thatched outbuildings and lincays mellowed by Time.

But within, it is commonplace enough; panelling of dark oak and overmantel of white plaster, wherein fat cherubs gambolled among garlands, and strange figures of men—and sometimes women—stood on each side of the family arms, have alike disappeared. And the old walled garden is hardly as prim and neat now as it was three hundred years ago, when it rang to the laughter of gay cavaliers, while gallants breathed soft nothings in the ears of damsels in hoop or farthingale.

Between the old farm and the sea stands the thin line of houses that calls itself Saunton, though the hamlet really bearing that name, an ancient place, is half a mile inland on the dusty Braunton road. Like Woolacombe, Saunton aims at being a watering place. Whether it ever will become one seems doubtful. To some people a long expanse of rush-grown sandhills *may* have charms—for me,

I confess it has none. Of course there is the sea, and a fine, though exposed, bathing beach; but one wants a little more than sea bathing nowadays to make a watering place. And Saunton has neither the rugged rocks of Mortehoe nor the bold headland of Baggy to serve as setting to its sandy waste. Such scenery as there is is too far away, and one is filled with a "restless, unsatisfied longing" to bring the lovely coast line away to the westward a dozen miles nearer. If Westward Ho is tedious, Saunton is positively doleful, and at low tide on a dull day I can imagine nothing more melancholy than this infant settlement, with its stony, unfinished roads and general air of being born before its time.

There is, however, one object of interest at Saunton. If instead of crossing Saunton Down we had followed its base we should have found in a hollow of the raised beach a large boulder of red granite weighing, it is thought, more than ten tons. Geologists have puzzled in vain over the presence of granite—and *red* granite—here. For, though Lundy is of granite, there is no *red* granite nearer than Dartmouth, unless we except one or two spots upon Dartmoor, and here the stone is of a different texture. The late Mr. Pengelly, F.G.S., suggested that it was floated to its present position on an iceberg.

As we walk along the firm, level sands towards the estuary we pass the skeleton of more than one wreck. About midway, embedded in the sand, are the ribs of a ship that went ashore so long ago that no one seems to know either her name or history. Even Charles Kingsley—indefatigable searcher as he was into all things belonging to his beloved North Devon—can only say that he believes these timbers are those of a man-of-war. Further on, close under Braunton Lighthouse and—strange satire—the lifeboat house, is the carcase of another poor ship. Outside, the

bar which lies across the mouth of Taw and Torridge stretches towards us—that bar which sometimes makes the passage of the estuary altogether impossible. To-day

The harbour bar is moaning

and heaving in a long, oily swell, over which the brown-sailed coasters slide easily enough; but there are times when the breakers rage over it furiously, and the bar is from end to end one vortex of seething billows. Then the coasters must anchor outside, or, if the weather gets worse, fly for the nearest refuge.

On our left the Burrows rise in lofty hillocks of blown sand. This is no narrow belt just fringing the shore, but an expanse nearly a mile wide, sinking in low and yet lower undulations as it reaches the flat, marshy meadows. The Burrows are, for the most part, covered with coarse grass and rushes, and, to the ordinary wayfarer, of no more interest than any other sandhills.

The botanist, however, thinks differently. To his eye, Braunton Burrows are almost sacred. For along them grow plants of some rarity, though why they should be given names conducive to lockjaw is a thing “difficult to be understood of the common people.” *Scirpus holoschænus* and *Matthiola sinuata* may be music to the plant collector; it is not so to the rest of the world. Of other plants with hard names our specimen hunter knows *Epipactis palustris*, *Erigeron acris*, *Euphorbia peplus*, the rare *Euphorbia Portlandica*, *Asperugo procumbens*, and *Teucrium scordium*, while on the marshes are *Chenopodium rubrum* and *Artemisia maritima*, and, near the lighthouse, *Isolepis holoschænus*, or mud rush.

We breathe once more, and walk onwards to the lighthouse—or lighthouses, for there are two—at the southern extremity of the three-mile long expanse. Between these



lighthouses and Braunton, among the sandhills, less than a hundred years ago there stood the little chapel of St. Ann, a building measuring only fourteen feet six inches by twelve. Unfortunately stones were wanted to build a cowshed ; the ruins were " handy," and—they disappeared. Until quite recently some remains were still to be traced, but now even they have vanished, and the chapel is as much a thing of the past as the village which it served, and which is said to have been overwhelmed by the sand some time in the reign of Elizabeth.\*

To return to the lighthouses. They are both very ugly, and only one is of any height. The smaller is, indeed, a mere box mounted on a tramroad, on which it is moved to and fro, according as the bar shifts its position. For the two lighthouses must be brought into one by vessels making for the estuary.

It is a fresh, breezy spot this point of yellow sand where Taw and Torridge meet and pass seaward towards the white breakers of the bar. At high tide the estuary is nearly a mile across ; wider still within the horns at the mouth where the tide has swept out a bay. Beyond are Northam Burrows and the Pebble Ridge, beyond that again the foliage-hung cliffs of Clovelly ; still further Hartland towering high over the meeting of the Bristol Channel with the Atlantic. Walk round the point and you look up two rivers—towards Barnstaple at the foot of its green hills ; towards Bideford seated on the western bank of Torridge with its long stone bridge—a bridge with a history. Nearer, Instow and Appledore look at each other across the flood—the former a staid and rather dull little watering place, the latter a small but busy port with shipbuilding yards and dry dock. On the hill behind stands Chanter's Folly, a look-out tower built by one Chanter whence, he

\* " Arch. North Devon."

might watch his ships coming in from sea. The placid bosom of the river is dotted with shipping—the clumsy but picturesque coaster, drifting slowly with the tide, the barque at anchor off Appledore, sand barges from Braunton Pill and Barnstaple. With ripple, with dancing of sunlit waves, the joint rivers swing merrily out to sea.

## CHAPTER X.

### APPLEDORE AND CLOVELLY.

Instow — Appledore — Hubba the Dane — Bloody Corner — Northam —  
Burrough — Westward Ho — The Pebble Ridge — Abbotsham — Portledge  
— Sir William Coffin and the Priest — Peppercombe — Buck's Mill —  
Hobby Drive — Clovelly.

BY walking along the beach to a point near the hospital ship at the back of the lighthouse we may signal for a boat to take us across to Instow. Probably it is some time before the fluttering handkerchief is noticed, but, when it is, the boatmen will come fast enough, for a passage from the lighthouse means more pay than that from Instow to Appledore. As we are rowed across we get a still more extensive view of the "Barnstaple river" (as the people call the Taw), and, on approaching Instow, the wooded slopes of Tapeley Park open out, crowned by the obelisk erected to the memory of Cornet Cleveland, who fell at Inkerman. Presently the keel grates on Instow Beach, and we pass up over the smooth, firm sands to the narrow fringe of villas that make up the more fashionable part of Instow.

It is bracing, it is fairly cheap, it has a pretty view and a long stretch of beach, and it is on a railway—this is all that can be said for Instow. Though only six miles from Barnstaple and three from Bideford, it is neither lively nor picturesque. There is no pier, or band, or rocks to scramble on, or caves to explore, or—anything; except perhaps a little boating when the tide is in. But generally the tide is out, and

the Torridge at low water is not inviting. In fact, you could not go very far without grounding upon a sand bank, or having to pull your arms out against a current which would take you out to the bar in no time. The church is far away on the hillside at the back among the cottages of the original village, for Instow is mostly of modern date, and is even now sometimes distinguished from the older settlement by the name of Instow Quay. The name, by the way, is a corruption of Johnstow—it is called *Johannestow* in Domesday.

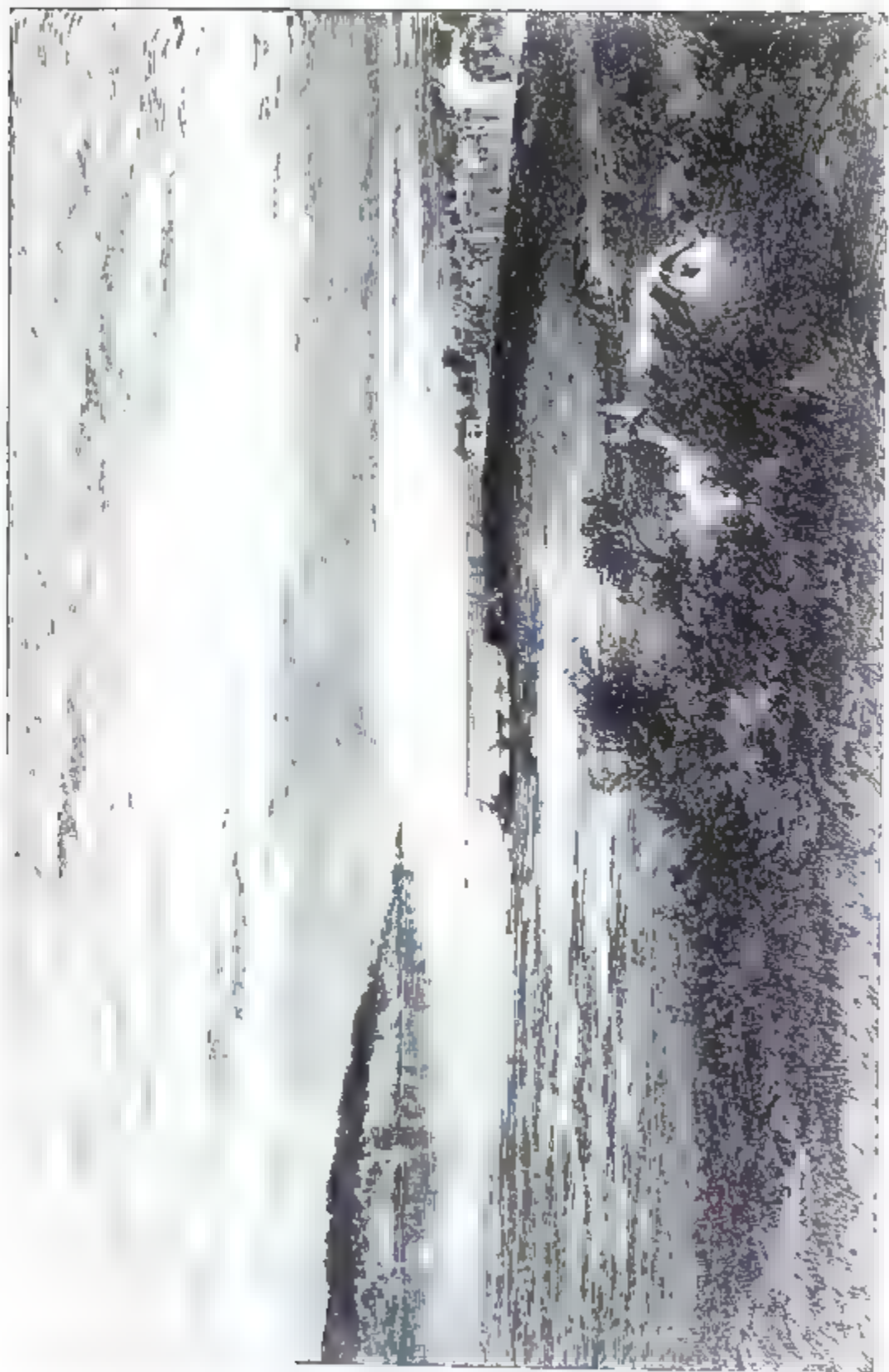
The quay, a small affair of seaweed-hung masonry, projects half the day into the mud of the foreshore, for Torridge when the tide leaves it is but a narrow streak, and the water only laps the quay wall for a couple of hours at most. It is not a bad place, though, for a quiet half-hour and a yarn with the ancient mariner, and up stream there is always the pleasant view of Bideford and Annery Woods. I should like to visit Bideford again; but, although a port, it is certainly not a coast town, being a long four miles in from the sea. Besides, we have been there before.\*

Instow is the only port having regular communication with Lundy Island. Off the quay lies the *Gannet*, a cutter commanded by one Captain Dark, and once a week in summer, and *when she can* in winter, she takes Her Majesty's mails, and any of Her Majesty's subjects that wish to go, to Lundy. We are almost tempted to cross over to-day, for the wind is fair and the sea smooth, and Lundy in fine weather has more charms than the world in general wots of. But we must finish with the mainland—at least this part of it—first.

Taking one of the ferry boats that lie waiting on the beach we cross to Appledore. As the boat draws near the end of our short voyage of half a mile or so we notice some-

\* "Rivers of Devon."

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APPLEDORE, FROM INSTOW QUAY.

thing of stir and bustle. Appledore, indeed, for so small a place, has a fair shipbuilding and ship-repairing trade, and dry dock accommodation for vessels of considerable burthen. Craft in all stages of repair and disrepair, and almost of every build, lie along the quay, or are moored up the river, and the sound of mallet and hammer comes merrily across the flood.

Merrily, too, come the voices of children, who at low tide make the gravelly beach beneath the quays their playground. There are legions of them, sunburnt, ragged little creatures, paddling in the waveless water or scrambling about the cables and chains of the vessels. Above, their fathers and brothers, home from sea, "a-looking out for a job," sprawl upon the "dolphins," as the great iron mooring posts are called, or prop themselves against the wall, pipes in mouths, hands in pockets, loafing as only sailors can. For background the white and grey and buff-coloured houses climb the hillside towards the elm trees above.

I often wonder how the sailor out of work manages to exist—and not only how he manages to exist, but how he contrives to kill time. You never see a sailor taking a country walk, you seldom see him walking at all. His one idea of getting through the day seems to be loafing. At that art he is past master. As to earning money by an off job, he is never very anxious, it seems to me, to take up anything unless the work is small and the pay liberal. Nor, even if no work be involved, will he always shake off his lethargy, preferring rather to go without pay than to take the least trouble. Here is a case in point. The port is not Appledore—never mind where it is lest the loafers grow ashamed. "Come fishing with me some night down Channel?" said an acquaintance. "When?" I asked. "Oh, whenever the boats are going." I inquired what the charge would be, and was told five shillings apiece. This seemed pretty well for sitting in a boat that would be going

under any circumstances, so I inquired whether the fish we caught belonged to us. "Oh, dear, no;" he said "all we get is one fish each, which we can choose." I shrugged my shoulders, but agreed to go. But as we parted he remarked, "I ought, perhaps, to tell you that there is a chance of their not coming up to let us know when they *are* going." "Why not?" I asked; "don't they care to earn ten shillings for a couple of fish?" He laughed. "They are too lazy to take the trouble to walk so far," he replied. "So far" was about six furlongs in the one case, and four in the other!

Appledore is divided, though the division is not very marked, into two parts, East and West Appledore. Of these, West Appledore is the oldest, though the whole town looks as if it had been built some time back in the Middle Ages. The streets are winding and narrow—so narrow, indeed, that in some you can almost shake hands with your neighbour opposite. Plate glass is practically unknown; the windows are filled with small panes, and the rooms within look dim and shadowy, the little light that filters through them being further reduced by a small forest of geranium and calceolaria. The pavements—when there are any—are mere sidewalks, and the roadways are pitched with pebbles. There is not much vehicular traffic through most of them, which is fortunate, as carts can seldom pass one another.

Yet the town, as a town, cannot boast of any great antiquity, though a hamlet was known to the Saxons as Apultroe, and it is called Apledore in Domesday Book. It then belonged to the powerful family of De Bruer, who held considerable estates at Buckland Brewer, as it is now called, and other places in North Devon. Even when Leland wrote, "Appledore village on the further Ripe of Budeford haven" was "a small thing," though whether he refers to the insignificance of the place or the haven "at the ebbe of



water" is not quite clear. It was not till the spacious days of Elizabeth that Appledore came into prominence. So fast did the trade with Virginia increase that Bideford could not cope with it, and so, owing to its position nearer the sea and the greater depth of water, the larger vessels went to Appledore. But even then it was far from populous. For, half a century after the Armada, a Devonshire historian writes that the parish of Northam (in which Appledore lies) had *lately* grown populous, and that "in the memory of man at a place called Appledore at the confluence of the Taw and Torridge, where the ships commonly stop and lie safe on shore when the tide is out, stood but two poor houses." But having made a start it must have grown very rapidly, for "now," continues Westcote, "for multiplicity of inhabitants and houses it doth equal many market towns, and is provided with many good and skilful mariners."

On the foreshore, a little to the south of the town, is a long flat rock, locally known as the Hubblestone or Wibblestone. The name is said to be a corruption of Hubba Stone, and the rock to mark the spot where, in the reign of King Alfred,\* the Danish chieftain Hubba was slain and subsequently buried under a cairn of stones now washed away or removed.

With a fleet of twenty-three ships Hubba sailed up the Torridge and landed, it is thought, near Appledore. But for once the Danes met their match. Odun, Earl of Devon, who had fortified himself in the earthwork of Kenwith Castle, issued forth, and, after a hard battle, drove them back from the high ground near Northam with the loss of twelve hundred men and their magic standard Reafan. Faint traces of this "castle" may still be seen on Hennaborough, a hill about a mile and a

\* The date is variously given as 874, 892, and 894. "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (Bohn) says 878.

half west of Biddeford, and a turn on the road to Northam called Bloody Corner is the spot where they are supposed to have made their last stand against the victorious English.

This spot, having climbed out of Appledore, we presently reach. It is marked by a slab of slate set in the hedge, just where the hill ascends towards Northam. At the top are cut the words "Bloody Corner." Below are armorial bearings, the shield bearing an anchor over an arm holding a firebrand, the crest a lion grasping an anchor. The motto is mutilated, the only word remaining being *Fideli*. Beneath are the words "Chappell's Crest" and the following verse :

Stop! stranger stop!  
Near this spot  
Lies buried  
King Hubba the Dane  
Who was slain by King Alfred the Great  
In a bloody retreat.

A.D. DCCCLXXXII.

Saxon Chronicle

(Chappell's Record).

The appearance of the stone is fresh and new, but from the style of the language it is evidently a replica of an older one cut perhaps (as the stone bears his arms) at the cost of Chappell the antiquary. It can hardly be said that the poet excelled himself on this occasion; but, perhaps, his history is better than his rhyme.

This road to Northam Town runs over high ground, and commands wide views over the estuary, over pasture land sloping seaward, and over the Northam Burrows, a tract not far short of a thousand acres in extent, tossed into knolls and undulations, covered with turf and gorse, and here and there not wholly innocent of marsh and bog. This waste stretches away to Westward Ho (which we can see along the hillside in the distance), the latter part being the celebrated golf links, after Musselburgh and St. Andrews

the best in the kingdom. These burrows and links are protected from the sea by that remarkable natural rampart of rolled boulders called the Pebble Ridge—of which more presently.

Soon we enter Northam, an ancient but diminutive town, with a church whose "tall wind-swept tower watches for a beacon far and wide over land and sea." Under its shadow were laid to rest the bones of Salvation Yeo, faithful henchman to Amyas Leigh. "Perhaps," thought Amyas, "the old man might like to look at the sea, and see the ships come in and out across the harbour bar, and hear the wind on winter nights roar through the belfry above his head." Save for its connection with Kingsley's greatest romance there is little of interest about the church, or, indeed, about the village-town, except an old dwelling, probably once a priest's house, near the church-yard gate. Most people will think more of the rough park close by to the left of the Bideford road, where, till only the other day, stood Burrough, the home of Amyas himself. I am treating Elizabeth's Viking, you see, as a reality; his actual existence I cannot prove. But what matter? Kingsley has made him real enough, so let us be content.

Well, then, Amyas' home—its picture lies now before me—was a low gabled house with projecting eaves and chimneys of many shapes and sizes. The picture shows it as separated from the park by a ha-ha, over the closely shaven top of which appear the golden heads of sunflowers. Alas! it has gone, leaving not a wrack behind, save a bit of timber here and there built into the walls of the new house, or rather pair of houses that have arisen on its site. I suppose it was necessary that it should come down. Still, one heaves a regretful sigh, for Burrough was not only the fictitious home of a fictitious hero, but the real one of a real hero—Stephen Burrough. Stephen Burrough was born in 1525, and commanded the

*Edward Bonaventure*, the largest of the little fleet that sailed with brave Sir Hugh Willoughby to the Arctic seas. This expedition owed its success to Burrough and Chancellor, "pilot major," who, when others would have turned back, kept onward, and, rounding the great headland named by them the North Cape, entered the White Sea. Like the "Ancient Mariner" in latitudes more southern, they

Were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

But this alone did not satisfy Burrough's daring spirit. Bent on discovering that waterway of romance, the North-West passage to India, he set out in a tiny vessel drawing only four feet of water, and in this cockleshell reached the Kara Sea, establishing a high latitude record which even we superior moderns (as we think ourselves) have but recently beaten.\* He was rewarded by being made Chief Pilot of England and one of the four Masters of the Navy.

The view from the park—that park where Mistress Leigh used to walk and pray for her sons as she watched the sails on the horizon out towards Lundy—is very beautiful. Trees are in the foreground, but not planted so thickly or in such a position that the panorama is hidden. For riverwards the ground falls away and "beneath,"—once more to quote Kingsley, "beneath, the Torridge like a land-locked lake sleeps broad and bright, between the old Park of Tapeley and the charmed rock of Hubbastone."

A mile from Northam, down towards the sea, is Westward Ho, another new watering place, that owes its fame as well as its name to Kingsley. It consists of one or two terraces, a fair sprinkling of villas, a big college for boys, and a hotel or two, yet is withal, as a writer in the *Graphic* says, "a tedious place, that no one would visit, had they anywhere better to go to." In fact, were it not for that rare thing in Devonshire, bracing air, bathing (when

\* "Kingsley's Country," p. 59.

the Atlantic will let them), the delights of golf, and the educational advantages, probably Westward Ho would have turned out a failure. As it is, it is decidedly dull, for although I suppose we all like pure air, we do not all play golf or need the benefits of education. Still, if you like a quiet life or "if"—to alter the *name* in the famous saying of Charles Dickens—"you have a grudge against any insurance company, go and live at Westward Ho, and draw your dividends until they ask in despair whether your name is Old Parr or Methuselah."

It only has one lion—if lion it can be called—the Pebble Ridge, *alias* the *Pobble* Ridge. This ocean barrier stretches from the estuary a length of two miles westward. It runs as straight as a line until the corner is reached where the rivers enter the sea, and then bends inwards. The pebbles vary in size from a diameter of nearly a yard to less than an inch, growing smaller and smaller towards the seaward face of the ridge, which is higher than the landward side, though scarcely looking the twenty feet of the guide books. It is indeed decreasing in height as it increases in breadth, and several times the sea has washed right over it, scattering the stones over the golf links, flooding the clubhouse, and even knocking down a house at the end of a terrace. There is no doubt that the ridge is moving landward, and it is said that people still living can remember when what is now sand, covered at every high tide, was pasture land, and out to sea, beneath the sand, are the remains of a forest. These remains, which are not unfrequently laid bare by the tide, consist of portions of trees, the shells of land creatures, the bones of deer, flint flakes, and weapons of prehistoric man.

The grazing rights over Northam Burrows belong to the inhabitants of Northam parish, and in former times these

\* "Kingsley's Country."

"Potwallopers," as they were called, used to restore the scattered boulders and pebbles to the ridge.\* This custom, however, has been discontinued, and possibly the neglect has been, to a certain extent, the cause of encroachment on the part of the ridge. The action of the "Potwallopers," however, can only have kept out the sea to a very limited extent; the Atlantic must have laughed at them, as it did at Mrs. Partington and her broom, and as it laughed at the Westward Ho Pier. Still, joking apart, if the ridge ever does become appreciably smaller, the burrows and links must be submerged at high spring tides. Indeed, there are plenty of salt water holes and ditches there now; and Goosey Pool, a large pond in the links, is, I think, brackish. And then woe to the lower parts of Westward Ho.

The ridge is of course an object of great interest to the geologist. One of them, the late Mr. Pengelly, has written a very able article on the subject, in which he tells us that the pebbles came from the cliffs between the Burrows and Hartland, and that they are of carboniferous grit. As beds of the cliffs are washed out by the waves, the rocks fall in angular masses, which, as they are rolled about by the tide and ground against one another, become perfect ellipsoids. In various stages of development they fringe the shore from Hartland Point to the estuary. "The low-lying extensive plain, unlike a precipitous cliff, sets no limit to the distance to which the breakers may fling them up. Accordingly, very many are cast beyond the grasp of the retreating wave, and hence the ridge."†

A confirmation of this view (did it need confirmation) is found in the curious experience of a Clovelly fisherman.

\* Potwallopers, before the passing of the Reform Bill, were those who claimed a vote because they had boiled their own pot in the parish for six months (Saxon *weallan* to boil; Dutch *opwallen*). "Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable."

† "Trans. Dev. Assoc.," vol. ii., p. 420.

He was in the habit of mooring his boat to an iron spike inserted in a boulder. One day after a heavy storm this boulder was missing. Long after, it turned up on the Pebble Ridge.\*

Many suppose that the ridge is answerable for the destruction of the submerged forest; that it advanced upon it, battered it down, and triumphantly moved inland over its ruins. But Mr. Pengelly attributes the submergence to subsidence of land. For, notwithstanding the relics of primitive man, the vegetable species are all of recent date, and similar to the trees and plants on the land beyond the Burrows.

Speaking of subsidence, the whole bay seems to have been subjected to depression or upheaval. There is the raised beach at the northern end of Branton Burrows and round Saunton Down. Then there is the vanished forest whence St. Brannock drew the oak for Branton Church, the one in front of us here, and, lastly, the low cliff at the end of the ridge shows two more raised beaches. "The forest and the beaches indicate that there have been two distinct movements of the coast—a subsidence and an upheaval. It seems probable that the elevation preceded the depression, but this is not quite certain. Both changes must have occurred within the Recent or Tertiary period." So says a writer in Murray.

But enough of geology. Enough, too, of Westward Ho. Let us get away from this grilling bank of pebbles and turn our aching eyes inland. There is nothing very interesting about the cliffs for a mile or two, so we will make a little *détour* and pay a visit to Abbotsham.

According to Westward Ho's estimate, Abbotsham is only a mile and a half away. According to that of the average man it is nearer three. And when you get there there is nothing to eat at the miserable little public-house

\* "Kingsley's Country," p. 55.

—a public-house presided over by an ancient dame who appears to think a tourist smaller than her own very small beer. However, let us not revile. Abbotsham is a pretty village, and, unless you arrive fasting, you will not regret going a little out of your way to visit it.

The village is scattered over the side of a hill that rises above a well-timbered valley. It is a small place, and, at first sight, hardly seems to need more than the smallest of churches. But the parish (like most in North Devon) is very scattered, and there are many farms lying away towards the cliffs and hidden in the folds of the green hills. So, if all came to worship who ought, I do not think that Abbotsham Church would have many empty seats after all.

It stands in a prominent position with fine trees about it and a pleasant view across the valley from the brow behind. It is the prettiest church between the Torridge<sup>1</sup> and Hartland, and one of the oldest. The shape is cruciform, the architecture Early English with a massive tower. And the font is Norman. There are very fine bench ends, one—in the nave—is carved with a representation of the Crucifixion, and another, directly opposite, has the figure of a bishop. Others, again, show emblems of the Passion, while one or two are grotesque, notably one of a nude man with his head between his legs, and a figure with a sheep's head chained to a log. The roof, though of the usual waggon kind, is less heavy than usual, and the ribs rise from figures of carved oak holding painted shields.

From Abbotsham an uphill lane leads to a farm on high ground whence the sea once more comes in sight. A cart track, passing through the barton, wanders out on to a furze-clad common, falling rapidly to the cliffs. On the western side it slopes to a brook nearly hidden in thickets, dropping down a deep gully to the beach. Crossing this we keep up the opposite steep, and come out upon broken



declivities rather than cliffs, sinking now and again into rough terraces or undercliff mantled with undergrowth. The beautiful curve of the coast westward is seen to perfection—in fact, the whole great bay is before us from Baggy to Hartland, Clovelly, on the wooded precipice, looking a mere streak of white. But it is a silent land. All the farms are “in over,” and the only sound is the raking of the sea dragging back the pebbles.

This same raking, however musical it may be in daylight, is mightily unpleasant after dark. I have anything but joyful recollections of a night spent in the little inn on the quay at Clovelly. My room overlooked the sea, and all night long the waves and the pebbles between them kept up a perfect Pandemonium. When I dropped asleep about three in the morning it was only to dream of express trains roaring past.

And now the roof of Portledge House, the seat of the Pine-Coffins, appears among the trees up the valley. There were Coffins there in the days of Elizabeth, as any reader of “Westward Ho!” will remember. Coffin, though a good and ancient, is hardly a pretty name, and the prefix is scarcely calculated to draw attention from the object with which the word must inevitably be associated. Whilst writing this I am reminded of a good story in connection with the name. I once knew a man called Wood, manager for the firm of Coffin and Company, large coal exporters. Into his office there came one day a dear old gentleman, who, mistaking him for a member of the firm, said politely, “Mr. Coffin, I presume?”

“No, sir,” was the reply; “the raw material.”

And oddly enough it was *Coffin*; Sir William “of that ilk,” Master of the Horse at the Coronation of poor Anne Boleyn, who was the means of introducing a scale of *burial* fees. The story goes that as he was passing Bideford

Church he came upon an excited crowd. "How now?" said the knight; "wherefore this rabble?" And he was told that the priest refused to bury a poor man unless paid with his cow, the principal article of value which he possessed. Sir William ordered the priest to bury the corpse forthwith, but the priest defied him. So the irate knight cast him into the empty grave, and bade the trembling sexton shovel in the earth. The priest endured it till the mould had nearly covered him, when he gave in and the corpse was buried.

But the priest complained to the Bishop, and Sir William was summoned before Parliament to answer for this insult to the Church. Nothing daunted, he came, and not only obtained his acquittal, but an Act regulating the fees chargeable to the poor.

Portledge House dates a long way back into the past. The main fabric is Elizabethan, but there was an earlier mansion than this; and some of the house saw the fourteenth century, or a period even earlier. The hall is octagonal; there is an ancient corridor called the Long Gallery, and a good deal of old carved oak, though the Minstrel Gallery has disappeared. But if it has left the house it has not left the family, for, in the shape of a pew, the Coffins sit in it on Sunday in Alwington Church.

The brook which comes down the valley is crossed by a dam near the beach, and forms a picturesque pool. Past it, a private path leads to Peppercombe, a dell sloping steep to the shingle, with a cluster of thatched cottages sheltering beneath the western hill. Beyond this the cliffs are not only closed to the public, but to all appearance pathless, and a choice must be made between the beach—a terribly rough walk—and the high road which runs along the hill top far above. Having some knowledge of the beach we choose the road.

The lane is steep, but it ends at last, and we reach the dusty highway, the main artery of this out-of-the-way corner of Devon, and the coast road to Clovelly and Hartland. It is not a particularly interesting road, but now and again through some break in the cliffs there is a peep of the coast or of blue sea framed in by the trees. Two or three miles of it, however, are quite enough, and we are glad when, having passed through the hamlets of Horns Cross and Hoops, we reach Buck's Cross, whence a lane winds down a deep combe to Buck's Mills. On the way a little church is passed with quaint half-slatted steeple set under the wooded hill, and then, turning a corner, there is another and a deeper combe—furze upon one side, timber upon the other, with the blue sea at the bottom. Here nestles the straggling hamlet of Buck's Mills.

A rocky stream runs down the glen beside the road fringed with lowly whitewashed cottages all the way to the limekilns on the beach. A short distance down the valley a leat is taken from the stream to supply the mill at the lower end of the hamlet. This mill gives its name to the village. The first word "Bucks" is a corruption of Bokish (some of the maps still spell it Buckish), but the meaning of the name I know not—possibly it is the name of some ancient miller.

The villagers are fishermen, and have the reputation of keeping themselves rather apart from their neighbours. They are said even to be unlike the folk of the villages adjacent in speech and complexion, and, according to local tradition, have, like the people of Beer in South Devon, a strong strain of Spanish blood in their veins. And for the same reason, for it is said that their forbears were shipwrecked Spaniards.

From Buck's Mills to some distance beyond Clovelly stretches a long line of wooded cliff. A hundred feet or so

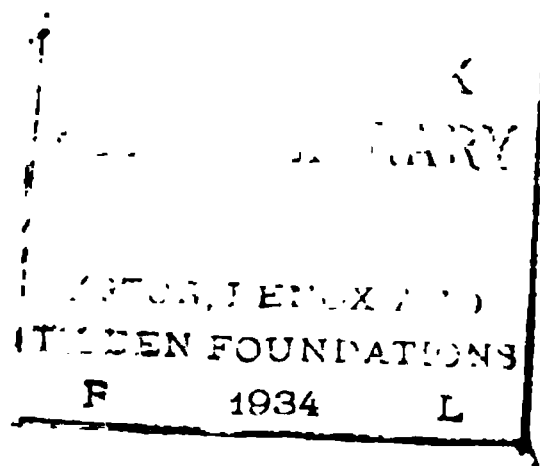
above the sea begins a belt of woodland that rises with magnificent sweep almost to the sky line.

The lifted arms of oak and ash  
Reach half-way up the bowery crest,  
And dip their fingers in the flash  
And glory of the painted west.

But it is not one great slope. Every half mile at least there is a fold, and a combe cleaves the woodland, down which the stream that has been so many ages hollowing it out rushes to its fatal plunge over the cliffs. Here are ferns and moss for ever green and fresh beneath the dense foliage; here are hyacinth and primrose and violet and foxglove and wild flowers of every kind. Here and there through the branches are delicious gleams of sea and sky, of the misty hills of Wales, and of the dark wall of Lundy.

To these heights we ascend by a rugged path. Below lies the little hamlet, the pale blue smoke curling against the steep sides of the combe. Eastward, the eye wanders back over the cliffs of Portledge, and round the sweep of the bay to Saunton Down, a dark background for the white pillar of the lighthouse. Westward the coast ends in Gallantry Bower, that perpendicular cliff beyond Clovelly that shuts out the line of bleak, wild precipice about the "promontory of Hercules"—Hartland Point.

But not yet do we reach the woodland. The way lies at first through rough fields and brakes, past thatched lincays and outlying farm buildings. It is not without an hour's hard labour that we get well in among the trees, and reach the Hobby Drive, which deserves a prettier name than that to which it is obliged to own from the fact that it was the *hobby* of its projector, Sir J. H. Williams. This Hobby Drive is a fine carriage road, winding along the face of the hills, or turning inland to avoid the recesses of some combe. Once among these wooded slopes, these shadowy glens, we begin to appreciate the character of the scenery; from a





CLOVELLY STREET.

distance one cannot guess what lovely bits of hill and dale are hidden away beneath the great masses of foliage. Yet all the while the Drive keeps level or nearly so. And there is some three miles of it before, from an elbow where the road approaches the edge of the cliff, we catch sight of that human staircase—Clovelly.

There it lies, its white cottages rising tier above tier in the "cleeve," or cleft in the cliff, to which etymologists say it owes its name, its little stone pier stretching into the sea, an arm that embraces quite a fleet of fishing boats. At the back of it the shaggy oaks of Clovelly Court and its purlieus cover the cliffs with a green mantle; over them soars the peak of Gallantry Bower; over that again is the horizon, the line broken as usual by the cliffs of Lundy.

Passing out of the woodland, out of the patches of sunlight filtering through the leaves into the broad, undiluted glare of day, we reach the head of the village, and, as we look down the street, agree that it is "by long odds the quaintest place in England."

Under our very feet is an abrupt street, every yard or two a step, otherwise the soil must be washed away by the heavy West Country rains, and every inch paved with cobbles, of which the surface, polished by many feet, is slippery exceedingly. Of course vehicular traffic is out of the question; goods and luggage are hauled up on little sleighs. Indeed, there is one way only for a horse and cart to get to the shore at all. This is by means of a break-neck road following the slopes of the cleeve to the west of the village. Fortunately horses and carts need go to the shore but seldom.

Some sixty years ago, when this road was little more than a narrow lane, a relative of mine, having gotten unto himself a wife, started on a driving tour through the West of England. In due time they reached Clovelly, and, their postillion being ignorant of the nature of the place, they

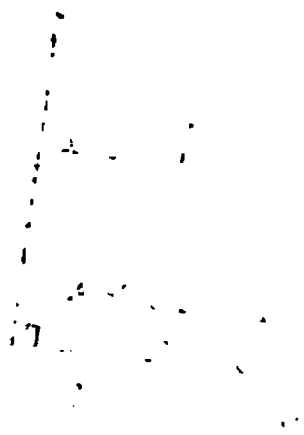
presently found themselves in this lane sliding seaward. It was only by good fortune that they were not collected bit by bit from the bottom of the declivity. The horses were stopped somehow and taken out, and the carriage, it being impossible to turn it, was dragged up the hill backwards. The advent of this reckless bride and bridegroom made a deep impression upon the Clovelly folk, and old men still speak of the pair who tried to drive "down along."

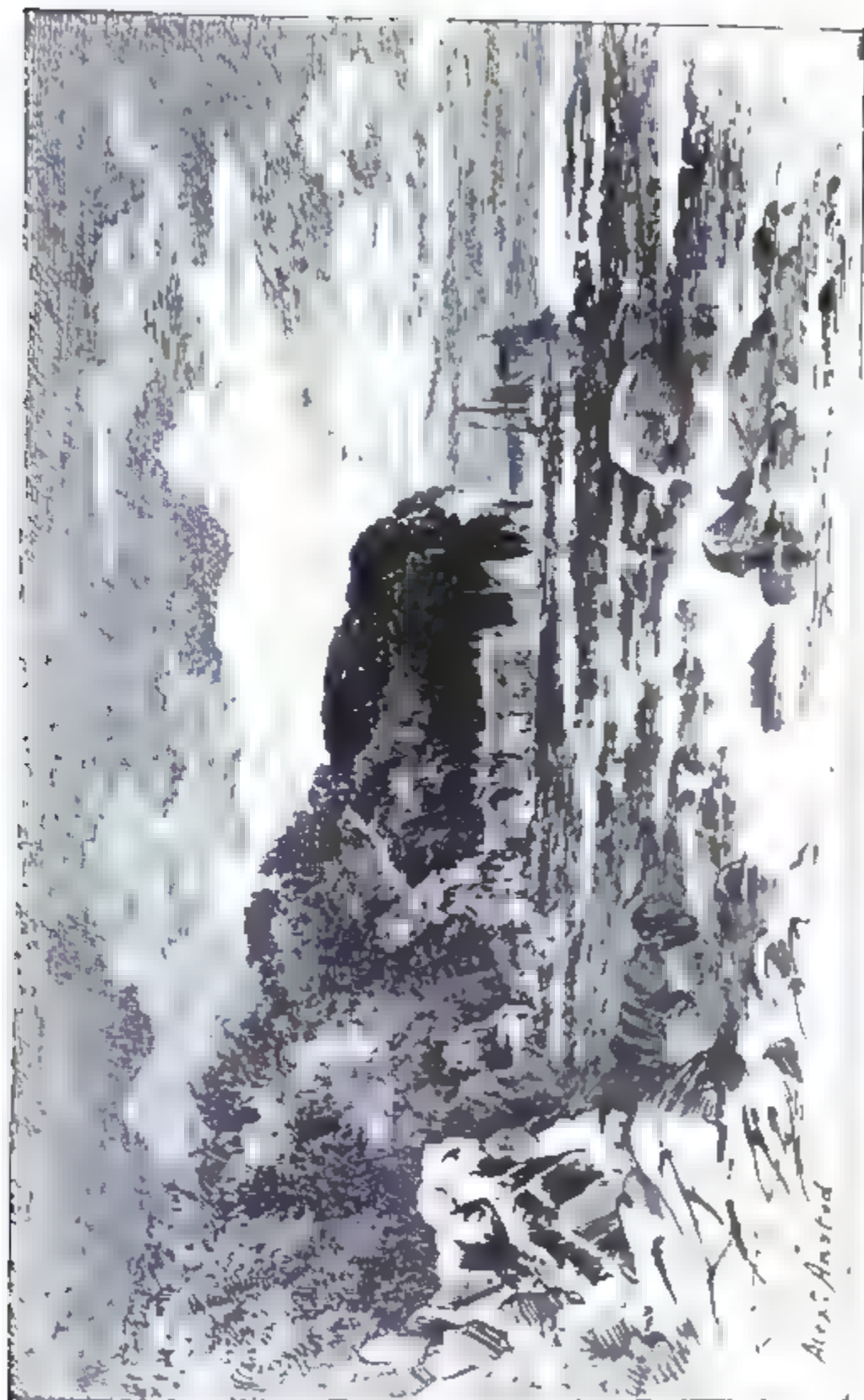
Despite its situation, despite the absence from its street of char-à-banc, coach, and 'bus, this picturesque village, whereof no two houses are alike, and scarcely two on the same level, is anything but dull. The feet of passers-by keep up an incessant patter, pleasant enough by day, but not so delightful at night when the inns turn out their customers, or the fishermen go up or down from or to their boats—for Clovelly is a great herring port. A tourist, driven to desperation by the sound, has thus recorded his impressions in the visitors' book at the New Inn :

The vision bright  
Of that dark night  
At Bethel long ago  
Had steps of light  
With angels white  
Whose feet tripped to and fro;  
And now in Devon  
One catches heaven  
In glimpses passing fair,  
And hears the feet  
In Clovelly's street  
Not angels' and *not bare!*

The man who has had "a drop too much" navigates this staircase at his peril. In fact, as a native said to the writer whose remark I have quoted above, "the folks do only dare get tight at one inn—the one at t' bottom o' the hill. Them as lives three doors away must keep always sober." And







Alex. Ansted

CLOVELLY.

it is hard work under any circumstances climbing this street. Here is another extract from the visitors' book :

The winding stair which natives call Clovelly  
The treadmill were a name more meet.  
Good-bye ! 'Tis hard to go away,  
But 'twould be harder far to stay.

The houses that line this staircase are picturesque to a degree. Flowers love Clovelly, and many a cottage is embowered in roses, fuchsia, and honeysuckle. The gardens, too, wedged in between the houses, are masses of bloom.

Let us descend—warily—to the quay, a semi-circular piece of rough masonry, the lower walls covered with rich brown seaweed—oar-weed the people call it—the upper hung with nets. There are one or two smacks and many fishing boats ; for trade is at a discount at Clovelly, and fishing at a premium. In fact, it is the means whereby for two-thirds of the year Clovelly lives. It is the Brixham of North Devon. You expect, therefore, to see nets, and they are here in plenty. The quay is festooned with them, so is every bit of wall anywhere near.\* Off the pierhead lie steamers with well-known West Country names, *Lorna Doone* and *Westward Ho !* waiting to return with excursionists to Ilfracombe.

In a cottage which is now part of the Red Lion Inn, abutting on the pier, dwelt the original of Salvation Yeo. The old man actually *was* called Yeo, but the Christian name was one of Kingsley's fancies. Although Yeo is gone, there are still many who knew the novelist. One ancient sailor—he must be close on fourscore now—told me, as he tugged manfully at his oar across the blue waters of the bay, that he had been taught by him “to Sunday School.” Another related how—twice over in his pride—

\* The take of herrings drift fishing is measured by the *maise*—612 fish. A quarter of a maise is therefore 153 fish, to which Sir Frederick Pollock calls attention as being equivalent, curiously enough, to the miraculous “draught.”—*English Illustrated Magazine*, vol. ii., “Clovelly.”

he had been invited up to see Kingsley's father and mother at Chelsea. An old lady washing clothes in front of a cottage near the lifeboat house, preparatory to spreading them over that excellent drying ground, the shore, had also been his pupil, and evidently felt towards him something very like affection. This old soul, by the way, is always washing clothes. Whenever I go to Clovelly, which is three or four times every summer, there she is planted behind her tub, with a "mushroom" straw hat shading her keen old face, hard at work. Nothing disturbs her; trippers go by in shoals, but she heeds them not. Even when you are talking to her—and she is ready enough to talk—she seldom looks up, and never leaves off washing. I believe she could wash in her sleep.

As for Kingsley himself, "his love for Clovelly was a passion." When he returned at the age of thirty, having left the place a youth of seventeen, his delight at finding Clovelly unchanged knew no bounds. "I cannot believe my eyes," he writes to his wife; "the same place, the same pavement, the same dear old smells, the dear old handsome, loving faces again." Fancy even loving the *smells*—now happily a thing of the past.

One of the most picturesque cottages overlooking Clovelly Pier is a long, narrow building with a slated verandah supported on sloping posts. It is called Crazy Kate's Cottage. Crazy Kate was a girl whose proper name was Kate Lyall. The loss of her lover at sea—most Clovelly men who do not die in their beds are drowned—affected her reason, and she became "mazed." "She wor' harmless enough, poor crittur," said the sailor who told me the story, "only cruel whist like, for her did care for 'un, they do say, terrible."

If you turn your gaze a quarter of a mile to the eastward you will see "Freshwater," the largest of the cliff cascades. The glen above was the scene of that sad meeting between

the Leigh brothers and their cousin Eustace, when Amyas wrung from his treacherous kinsman the papers about the Popish plot. Kingsley gives this cascade a height of "some hundreds of feet." But his love for Clovelly and its surroundings has, I am afraid, made him partial. Fresh-water, though fine enough in its way, is no Norwegian foss.\*

\* "Up over," half an hour's walk from the head of the stair where the road joins the highway to Hartland, are the large earthworks known as Clovelly Dykes or Ditchen Hills. Those people who want to connect Clovelly with the Romans, and to trace its name to *'Clausā Vallis* (the shut in valley), would call these earthworks a Roman camp. But they are certainly Celtic (though of course it is possible that the Romans may have occupied them), and the name Clovelly is much more likely to be a softening of Cleeve Lea (the cliff slope or pasture). In Domesday it is called Clovelie, which is getting pretty near. The camp, which is rather oval than circular, has three entrenchments, one within the other, and, as far as can be made out (for a great part is covered with furze); the height varies from twenty-five feet on the outer vallum to ten feet, or thereabouts, on the inner. The area of the whole is about twenty acres, and the space within the inner vallum (measured by pacing) about three hundred and fifty feet by two hundred and twenty. When I saw this, the strongest part of the camp, it was a cornfield; so do times change. A ditch runs, or ran, round the outer bank, and was repeated, though not to so great a depth, round each of the other lines.

## CHAPTER XI.

### HARTLAND.

A Remote District — Clovelly Church — The Carys — Clovelly Park — Gallantry Bower — Mouth Mill — Exmansworthy — On Samplers — Hartland Point — The Pony and the Foghorn — Smoothlands — Blackmouth — Hartland Abbey — Stoke St. Nectan — A Bellicose Parish.

Of rich oak bosses on each height,  
And rills that ripple down the glen,  
Now foaming into purest white,  
Now running into gloom again ;

Of deep ravines and hollow combes,  
Of foxglove banks and ferny dells,  
And a fair bay which ever booms  
Its music as the ocean swells ;

And hawks that, wildly screaming, wheel  
Around each rude and savage cliff,  
And sea birds, that with downy keel  
Skim o'er the billows like a skiff.

E. CAPERN.

IN the very north-western corner of Devonshire, remote from the railway, remote from a town, remote from anything, lies a district which, until days very recent indeed, was as little known to the average Englishman—nay, I may go further, and say the average Devonshire man—as *Ultima Thule* itself. Nowadays the walking tourist plodding coastwise into Cornwall and the passengers by coach from Bideford or Clovelly *do* now and again import into it something from the outside world ; but few and far between are the visits, for Hartland lies on the road to nowhere.



HARTLAND. FROM A SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR.

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Hartland—I speak of the district, not of the village, though that is dull enough—has in the country inland little to recommend it. It is to the glen beneath the church-town, the grand church itself (“the Cathedral of North Devon” as it has been called, above all to the splendid coast line, that Hartland owes its growing fame. Here along

The foam-laced margin of the western sea

are combes and “mouths,” towering precipice and spray-swept down, streamlet and cascade, enough to satisfy the most exacting of those searchers after the picturesque that year after year come in greater flood to the hills and valleys of the West.

It is easier to get into Clovelly than out of it. Whether you ascend by the winding stair or by the road that zigzags upwards to Yellery Gate, the entrance to Clovelly Park, the pull is stiff. The grounds of Clovelly Court—where once the Carys lived—must be passed through if we follow the coast; but be it remembered that they are closed on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and, like the Hobby Drive, are not to be entered without the payment of a small fee even on other days. It may still the grumblings of those who object to pay for scenery to be told that these fees go towards local charities.

But before we explore the wild recesses of the Deer Park let us look into the church where lie the bones of many generations of dead and gone Carys, and where Charles Kingsley’s father was rector half a century ago. Clovelly Church stands above the hill to the west of the village, side by side with Clovelly Court. It is an ancient building, as shown by its plain, sturdy Norman tower and fine old arch to the porch with chevron moulding. The porch itself is ample and cool, and covered over with good oaken roof. And the font is Norman, too—some say Saxon, though the assumption that there was once a

Saxon church at Clovelly does not rest on basis very substantial. The rest of the building is Perpendicular, and of no special interest. The interest lies chiefly in the tombs.

They are nearly all of Carys, or of descendants of Carys. The oldest, in the chancel floor, is marked by a brass to Robert Cary, a mailed warrior; another brass is also incised with a figure in armour; and a third, to George Cary, is dated 1601. The monument over the south end of the chancel rails must be that of wild Will Cary of "Westward Ho!" "In memory of William Cary Esq<sup>r</sup>," runs the inscription, "who served his King and Country in y<sup>e</sup> office of a Justice of Peace under three Princes Q. Elizabeth, King James and King Charles the I. and having served his generation dyed in the 76 yeare of his age An<sup>o</sup>. Dom. 1652. Omnis caro fænum." The only objection to be made is that the young gallant would only have been two years old at the time of the Armada! But this is a trifle after all.

Facing this monument is placed, and very appropriately placed, a brass to the memory of the man who has done much more than the epitaph to make "Will Cary" known to fame—Charles Kingsley. This brass, which is also to the memory of his wife Mary Lucas, was put up by their daughter Mrs. Harrison, and her husband, the present rector.

"The churchyard," says a writer in the *Standard*, "the churchyard is to us like a chapter of romance. Half the names we know best in 'Westward Ho!' are on its stones. Here are two names that conjure up those 'five desperate minutes' on the mountain road when the gold-train was taken; when the surviving Spaniards 'two only who were behind the rest, happening to be in full armour, escaped without mortal wound, and fled down the hill again.' They were chased by 'Michael Evans and Simon Heard. . . ."

two long and lean Clovelly men . . . who ran two feet for the Spaniards' one; and in ten minutes returned having done their work.' There is a name that reminds us of John Squire the armourer—there are Ebbsworthy and Parracombe, the two truants found by Amyas and Ayacanora in the forest with the Indian girls who had beguiled them from their duty. There are Yeo and Hamblyn, and a Passmore, which last calls up the portly figure of the good-natured 'Lucy Passmore, the white witch to Welcombe.' "

And the epitaphs are eloquent of the fate of those who "go down to the sea in ships." Of curious ones there are singularly few. But a slab opposite the east window has a verse ending quaintly:

Think not that youth will keep you free  
For Death at 27 months call'd off we.

Again on the south side where "imbosom'd in this silent grave lie the mortal remains of Robert Hockin," his widow thus apostrophises the departed:

And didst Thou lead the way before that I  
Who after two years might learn how well to die,  
Lo, now I follow thee into that Life  
Where can be no divorce 'twixt man and wife.

The tower is worth climbing, if only for the view of the bay. But the stairs end with the belfry, and the roof can only be reached by ladders—a very primitive contrivance that will commend itself to few but the young and active.

Clovelly Court is below. It is not the old house where the Carys lived—*that* perished by fire a hundred years ago. They had rare times these Carys, and the Giffords their predecessors. No criminal need be handed over to the sheriff; they hanged him themselves. Had they not the right? Truly—still, if they had not, it would probably have mattered little, for might was right in those days and short

rede was good rede. Even now, though the power of life and death has gone, the lord of the manor may take a portion of the fish caught in the bay for his own use. Whether Mr. Hamlyn-Fane ever exercises this right, I did not inquire.

Delightful are the grounds, with timbered park and paths fringed by rhododendron. But the most romantic part is along the cliff, where the paths meander through glades of oak, and in and out between mossy boulders. Far below, through the interlacing branches, the sun glitters upon the points of the waves, and here and there, where comes a gap in the foliage, you may see the whole extent of the bay, not only to the estuary of Taw and Torridge, but even to the pale line of the rugged headland that rises above the Rock of Death. Gulls float lazily in mid-air, and, half-way down the cliff, you may occasionally see one or two dark birds with legs of bright scarlet. They are Cornish choughs, birds that become rarer and rarer as time goes on. Before many years have flown they bid fair to be as extinct as the dodo.

We emerge from the oaks and reach a heathery common sloping upwards towards a headland, the summit crowned by a handful of wind-swept trees. Sheer to the boulder beach, smooth and regular as a wall, falls the cliff the most perpendicular in Devon. There is scarcely an excrescence in the whole face of it, though it is close on four hundred feet in height, and you may see the whole wall, from summit to base, by leaning over the sharp, clean-cut edge. The cliff is called Gallantry Bower—why, no one knows, unless, as someone suggests, the name is a corruption (like many other names in this district) of some Celtic words, and stands for *Col an veor*, the great ridge. The very shadowy tale that it gets its name from the suicide of a hopeless lover may be dismissed without comment, for self-destruction has certainly no connection

with a deed of gallantry. Besides, how about the bower?

From this imposing cliff a stony track drops into Mouth Mill, a deep wooded glen watered by the usual trout stream, and opening on to the shore close by a cottage or two, and an old limekiln. On the eastern side of the cove is the Black Church Rock, a dark steeple-shaped mass rising at the foot of the cliffs to a height of eighty feet or so. It is pierced by two arches, or, rather, openings—for the heads are rectangular, owing to the direction of the strata, which here run in oblique lines and not in curves. Not that curves are absent. A great block that has fallen from the cliff is bent and twisted till it looks like the ribs of a wreck. Indeed, everywhere along this coast we shall notice the strange contortions of these carboniferous rocks.

A difficult climb through a coppice of low, weather-beaten oak, under the branches of which you have sometimes to creep almost on all fours, is the only way out of Mouth Mill coastwise. After ascending three or four hundred feet, we find ourselves at the top of the cliffs, in some rough fields, and soon cross another combe, down which rattles a little stream that flings itself over the cliff in a shower of spray.

Above is Windbury Head, and as we mount the landward slope we notice that it is fortified near the summit by the segment of an earthwork or "cliff castle." Then more fields and another little dell, and so we reach Exmansworthy Cliff, which is a good hundred feet higher than Gallantry Bower, though not so precipitous. Here we pause and look back past the Black Church Rock and Gallantry Bower to the long line of timbered cliff beyond Clovelly, which is hidden in its deep cleeve, though the white Court above is still conspicuous.

It is a wild country. No house is visible except the

Court and some cottages far away on the Hartland road, which appear now and again as some higher point is reached commanding a view over the bleak highlands that roll away to the south. There is no path to this road, or even to Exmansworthy Farm, a lonely homestead difficult to find, but, according to the map, some way "in over."

When lunch time comes—and it comes with a celerity that is surprising — the man who has been so improvident as to leave Clovelly provisionless must content himself with such fare as he can get there, or at some other of the farms that sparsely dot this bleak country, and these he will not find it an easy matter to discover.

This out of the world part of Devonshire, this country at the back of the Pillars of Hercules,\* is just the place where you would expect to find old-world manners and customs, old-world fashions and old-world furniture. Here linger those fearful and wonderful works of art called samplers, the evolution whereof was once considered part of the education of every well-regulated female child—next, indeed, to the acquisition of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue. (We should call them waste of time nowadays, but then the female child—well or ill-regulated—is rarer than she was a hundred years ago.) I remember one—a sampler, not a child—at a cottage in Hartland Town, a piece of work of extraordinary merit, no doubt, in its day. And the verses—they generally embroidered "poetry" as well as the alphabet and the numerals—were wonderful. I do not know what they were meant to convey, and most of them I have forgotten, but one line I carried away with me and have often pondered. The writer, after thank-

\* *Visuntur hinc Antiquis, sic dictæ Herculis Columnæ, et non procul hinc Insula Herculeæ.*—"Itinerary of Richard of Cirencester." Herculeæ is Lundy.

ing the Creator for various mercies, expresses gratitude for

*A heart to regale and recline !*

Still, with all their absurdities, I confess to a tender feeling for these faded specimens of the "art needlework" of the past. About them there is a whiff, as it were, of the "good old days"—a sort of pathos about the quaint designs of a century ago.

Long laid to rest the patient hands  
That played with primal tints,  
And faded are the silken strands  
As sad and sallow chintz.

One figures to oneself the mother in high-backed chair at her spinning wheel, whereof the drowsy "whirr" fills the quiet room, the sunlight printing the lines of the little old window panes on the floor, the low window seat and pot of roses on the sill, while at the mother's feet sits the child stitching slowly at her sampler.

Her little childish world was set  
Within that tarnished frame,  
Beginning with the alphabet  
She found so hard to name ;  
In early English A to N,  
In Gothic O to Z ;  
Beneath the figures 1 to 10  
Stand out in dingy red.

And then she set herself to build  
A house two stories high,  
With many rows of windows filled,  
Beneath an azure sky.  
The tiles have lost their ruddy tone ;  
Unsteady leans the wall ;  
The winds of many years have blown  
Yet has it braved them all,

Her garden grew, a garish green—  
Those yellow streaks were walks ;  
Long lines of lilies still are seen,  
Now drab on withered stalks.

The roses in a clustered knot  
Have never ceased to blow,  
Though planted in that tiny plot  
So many years ago.

With childish art she stitched a heart  
Although at such an age  
She had not known of Cupid's dart  
Not e'en from Herrick's page.  
Content beside her mother's knee  
She hummed some simple lilt ;  
Ah me ! she must have danced to see  
Her triumph glow in gilt ! \*

We scramble onwards by field, by gorse brake, by strips of common, over innumerable fences and cliff edges rough with undergrowth, till we reach the fine scenery about Chapman Rocks. Here is Fatacott Cliff, apparently the loftiest of the whole line stretching from Mouth Mill to Hartland. And now comes Shipload Bay, a cove shut in between the precipitous walls of Eldern Point and the cliffs of Titchberry, so called from the farm-hamlet at their back. The rocks of Eldern Point are twisted into every conceivable shape of zigzag and curve. Just inside the Point they are thrust upwards in the form of concentric arches, band within band of stone. Into this bay, even in calm weather, the sea rolls majestically, sliding far up the beach of gravelly sand.

Over the head of Titchberry Cliffs the going is worse than ever, but the roughest ground comes to an end sometime, and, a mile from Shipload Bay, we reach better ground at Barley Bay, another little cove, across which rises that great rock wall, the summit of which we have seen for the last hour—Hartland Point.

It is not the height of Hartland Point that makes it so striking ; it is the perpendicular wall of rock, dark and forbidding, with nothing but a few clumps of heather to

\* " On a Sampler." By Reginald Helder. *English Illustrated Magazine*, August, 1894.



soften its grimness; its wild and indeed mountainous appearance, which gives it a look of grandeur shared by no other headland in the Bristol Channel. For this Promontory of Hercules, the Heracleia Acte of Ptolemy, is almost detached from the neighbouring cliffs, and thrusts itself into the breakers at the end of a jagged ridge scarped down on either hand in precipice.

To get upon the headland one must scale this Alpine-looking *col*—a feat only to be attempted when there is little or no wind, as the edge is only about a foot wide. The summit, a few feet higher, is covered with a level strip of turf varying in breadth from ten feet to thirty. Then on each side fall the cliffs, so suddenly that at the end you may sit and dangle your legs over the tower of the lighthouse, built on a little platform two hundred and fifty feet below and perhaps a hundred above the tide.

This lighthouse, approached by a road cut in the eastern face of the headland, has, strange to say, only been built twenty years. How many vessels went down with all hands off this fearful corner before that warning gleam shone forth over the wild waste of waters, one shudders to think. Like the one at Bull Point, it is provided with a powerful foghorn, and the good done by both lantern and foghorn may be seen by the disappearance of the old deadhouse for the drowned, once a feature of Stoke Churchyard.

A passing acquaintance told me an amusing story about Hartland foghorn, or, as it should be called, siren. Wishing to take his wife on a visit to the lighthouse, he, for her greater ease, hired a pony. Upon reaching the building, he tethered the animal somewhere by the entrance. When they had inspected the lighthouse, the keeper volunteered to turn on the siren, and forthwith a frightful blare roared out over the reefs. But when they went

for the pony, no pony was to be found. And it dawned upon them that ponies possibly did not like sirens. Ultimately he was discovered somewhere inland brought up by a gate.

The view from Hartland is immense. To the right is the Bristol Channel, to the left the Atlantic. The line of demarcation is so pronounced that, while the eastern side of the headland is washed by the waves of the Severn Sea, against the western beats the surges of the Atlantic. There is a change in the very motion of the water. On this side are the short seas of the Channel—on that the “league long rollers” of the ocean. The change is accounted for by the fact that Lundy no longer acts as breakwater and by the alteration in the “lie” of coast. Below Hartland it no longer runs east and west, but north and south, so that the waves roll upon the beach a broadside instead of striking sideways, as is the case to the eastward. All of a sudden you find yourself looking far down the Cornish coast—so far that on a clear day I believe you will see the blunt headland of Tintagel.

Lundy, now but twelve miles distant and seen nearly end on, looks more lonely than ever, for now may be fully appreciated what a waste of waters stretches away behind the western cliffs. These same cliffs are exposed even more fully than Hartland itself to the wrath of the Atlantic; I am told that, even from the mainland, the surf may sometimes be seen spouting up the stern barrier of granite—for Lundy is of granite, the only granite this side of Dartmoor.

Off Hartland Point runs a swift tide race, and the strife of wind and waters when the ebb of the Bristol Channel meets the gale off the Atlantic is a sight to be remembered. On the stillest day the surface of the water is streaked with lines of foam, relict of the hurricane, while the everlasting swell rolls over the threshold of this, the very



HARTLAND POINT AND LUNDY ISLAND.

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doorpost of the Bristol Channel, with a solemn dirge-like tone that rises even to the summit of the cape.

And now our wanderings are no longer trackless. A path appears, following closely the edge of a broken line of cliff. Here is Upright Cliff, as its name implies a perpendicular precipice rising above a cove guarded on its northern side by a sloping stack of rock called the Cow and Calf. Across the cove the land falls into the green hollow of Smoothlands, but rises again into a peaked eminence jutting into the breakers. In the side of this headland, facing us as we tramp southward, is a huge round mass of rock, for all the world like a stranded whale or the hull of a ship lying on its side. Beyond is Damehole Point, another rocky peak, so gnawed out by the waves that it has become a peninsula, and will some day, if the world lasts long enough, become an island.

At the back of Smoothlands we cross a stream which ends in another cliff cascade, and thence pass over a brow and down a steep furzy slope to Black Mouth. As we open out the valley the lofty tower of Stoke Church comes into view, rising over the woods on the southern side.

Black Mouth deserves its name. For the actual *mouth* of the combe is a dark rift in the slate rock, through which the stream that comes down from the other side of Hartland Town rushes to the sea. Outside the mouth is barred by formidable "sharks' teeth," round which the lips of surf move with a suction that speaks volumes for any craft coming within its merciless maw. Not a nice place for a ship—a note of war rather than of peace sounds ever from that relentless mouth. How different the combe itself! Here, past the stately mansion, through bright green meadows, beneath the shadow of oak, elm, and ash; lower, between turf with gorse and fern besprinkled, roams the little river, which looks as if it could not be angry if it tried.

The mansion is Hartland Abbey. We "sight it," as sailors say, as we climb slowly out of Black Mouth. It is a good mile from the sea, sheltered on two sides by the walls of thecombe, and set about as well with a wooded amphitheatre.

The original abbey is said to have been founded by Githa, wife of the great Earl Godwin, and was dedicated to St. Nectan. It was a thank-offering for the Earl's escape from shipwreck. Of Githa's building nothing remains, but the old Augustinian monastery that arose on its site has not so disappeared. In the basement of the mansion you may still see some of the cloisters—those cloisters where the monks walked and talked so many centuries ago. On one of the arches is an inscription setting forth how the cloisters were built by the Abbot John of Exeter between 1308 and 1329.

The vale in which the Abbey stands is, and must always have been, a delightful retreat. Those old monks knew well how to choose the sites for their monasteries. On either side of the lawns which carpet the bottom, on either side the trout stream were—as there are to-day—thick woods, woods which harboured the *harts* from which, if Leland is to be believed, Hartland took its name. It is an oasis of beauty in a desert of commonplace, for no one can call the scenery inland other than dull. Even Hartland Town partakes of the prevailing monotony. Large as it is, no village in the West is more uninteresting, nor will anyone be found to quarrel with the dictum of the guide-book writer who calls its chapel-of-ease a chapel also of ugliness.

So Hartland may be left to itself while we pass up over the Warren to the great church of St. Nectan. On the top of the down is a ruin, but not of archæological interest. It is only the shell of a "pleasure house" built by an invalid once residing at the Abbey, who would visit it daily

to drink in the sea breezes. He had a splendid and a varied view, for right and left this ruin commands a rugged array of cliffs, while below is the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of shipping, for Harty Point, as Camden calls it—and indeed as some West Country folk call it to this day—is “touched” by most vessels going to or from the great ports of the Bristol Channel.

The first question that must occur to most visitors to Stoke St. Nectan's—Stoke is the hamlet at the churchyard gate—is how on earth the great church ever becomes filled. Hartland itself is two miles away, and the exposed situation alone is anything but tempting, not to speak of the long walk on a day wet or blustering. And they get plenty of both at Hartland.

The building mainly dates from the fourteenth century, the Perpendicular windows being later insertions. There is a nave, with chancel on the same level, north and south aisles and chapels—that on the north dedicated to St. Mary, that on the south to St. Saviour—and short transepts. Right across the church runs a superb oaken rood screen 7ft. wide at the top. There are also parclose screens. The eastern part of the roof of the nave is curiously and rather gaudily painted with large stars, and is less to be admired than that of the Chapel of St. Mary,\* which has some good carving.

In a loft in this chapel is preserved the old pulpit, on which appears a goat with *tusks*, and, round the top, the inscription “God save King James Fines,” the last word being probably a mis-spelt *finis*. In the opposite chapel of St. Saviour are some old carved bench ends which happily escaped the fate of those in the body of the church, which some idiotic *restorer* caused to be *planed smooth*!

\* The Rev. G. Tugwell in his “North Devon Handbook” assigns this Chapel to St. Saviour, and the other to St. Mary, but the verger assured me that this is an error.

The chancel is unusually bare, but there are handsome sedilia and piscina, and the altar is of serpentine and well sculptured. It is said to have been brought from the Abbey. In the chancel floor, removed from its former position near the door, is a slab edged with brass to the memory of one Thomas Docton. Some years since it bore the following inscription, almost word for word the same as the one at Kingsbridge :

Here I lie outside the chancel door  
Here I lie because I'm poor  
The further in, the more they pay  
But here I lie as warm as they

According to the verger, the brass rim bearing the letters, or the letters themselves, became loosened by the feet of the congregation and disappeared. "The tomb, however," as Murray justly remarks, "gives the lie to the assertion of poverty." Near it, over the arch to the rood stair, is the oldest monument in the church—a brass to Anne, widow of William Abbott. It bears the date 1610.

For we shall look in vain for the figures 1055 which, according to Mr. Tugwell, are to be found on a stone in the pavement. This stone, which, by the way, is now set in the wall of the south transept, is a *seventeenth century* tablet, and, as it bears a perfectly plain inscription in the English of that period—to the memory of Mary, daughter of Nicholas Luttrell—it is odd that so extraordinary a mistake should have been made. It is true that the stroke of the figure 6 is very faint indeed ; still, the inscription is quite enough to show that the memorial has nothing to do with the days of Edward the Confessor.

An interesting inscription, dating a few years later, may be read on the north wall of the chancel: "In memory of John Velly of Hartland, Gentleman, who faithfully served that glorious Prince CHARLES the martyr and his Son



during the late civil wars of England as a Captain Lewetenant to Sir Richard Cary, and having survived these calamities lived to the enjoyment of peace and prosperity and a good old age dying in his 77th year. Dec. 7th 1694."

Mr. Tugwell says that there is a stone in the floor of the nave (I have not myself seen it) to the memory of "Henery" Willcock, who died in 1720, at the age of 24, bearing the following address :

Stay awhile you passers bye  
And see how I in dust do lie  
Tho I ly here in confusing mould  
I shall rise up like shining gold.

This young man appears to have had a mighty good opinion of himself.

With the exception of the Norman arch in the north porch (in a chamber over which are preserved the parish stocks), perhaps a portion of the tower, and the font, there is not much left of the early church of Hartland Abbey. The font is quaint, being sculptured with faces all more or less hideous—meant to represent, says the parson-poet Hawker of Morwentstow, the righteous looking down upon the wicked.

One is accustomed to queer appearances in the walls of these West Country churches. I have seen a very respectable fernery sprouting from the *inside* of the tower of more than one, but on the walls of the tower of St. Nectan's quite another growth—if that be the proper word—appears. A saline incrustation, which has been found on analysis to consist of carbonate of potass and phosphate of soda, has eaten (and the process still continues) large holes in the stones. Why the inside of the tower alone is attacked, I cannot explain ; the outer stones present, so far as I can remember, no trace whatever of this sacrilegious compound.

One of the bells has a curious rhyming inscription. "The

names of Dennis, Heard, Chope and Rowe with us can never die. They saved our lives not only so but bade us multiply." As certain of these gentlemen were churchwardens, it is presumed that they "saved the lives" of the bells by having them recast. Of the other five, three also bear noteworthy inscriptions: "We are a beacon to your God Attend our call and 'scape His rod"; "A voice from the Temple a voice from the Lord"; and "Watch for ye know not the hour of death."

By all means ascend to the top of the tower, which, including the pinnacles, rises to a height of 147ft. Hence is a magnificent view over land and sea: of Hartland Town and of Hartland Vale with the Abbey set in its midst, of Black Mouth and other indentations of the stern coast, and of Lundy guarding the Channel entrance a dozen miles away. On the eastern face of the tower, a long way beneath, the figure of St. Nectan stands in a niche, looking towards the place where once stood his Abbey. One sapient observer opines that "St. Nectan is a *female* saint." If female saints wore beards and kept their heads warm with mitres, then this grim-looking figure may be that of a lady. For our part we incline to the belief that the saint was of the sterner sex.\*

Anyhow, the saint *ought* to have been a man. For surely no church was ever more militant than this church of St. Nectan. Just look at the churchwarden's accounts: "Paid to George Husbande for three bullett bagges for the three churche musquettes, xii*d*. Paid for lace to fasten the lyninge of the morians belonging to the churche corselettes and for priming irons for the chirche musquettes, ii*d*. Paid for a hilt and handle and a scabert for a sworde, and for mendinge a dagger of the church, iis." And so on—Roger

\* St. Nectan was brother of St. Morwenna, and "founded the stations, now the churches, of Hartland and Wellcombe."—Rev. Hawker's "Cornish Ballads."

Syncocke getting a penny for mending a "churche pike," and some nameless person at "Exon." having as much as £6 13s. for other arms. What on earth could a church have wanted with all this panoply? Verily this must have been a wild corner of Gloriana's dominions when the church needed "muskettes" and "corselettes," not to speak of "swords" and "daggers."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BORDERLAND OF DEVON AND CORNWALL.

Mouths—Hartland Quay—Catterin Tor—Spekesmouth—Henbury Beacon—  
Welcombe—An Eccentric Parson—"Jollow's"—Welcombe Mouth—  
Cruel Coppinger—Marsland Mouth.

"The foam-laced margin of the western sea."

FROM the borders of Somerset, where our walk commenced, we have now nearly reached the confines of another county, the "rocky land of strangers" — Cornwall. But how different the scenery! Here are no massive downs plunging a thousand feet into the sea, but precipices of rock; no woods of oak and ash clothing the declivities almost to the water line, indeed no trees at all; no watering place ensconced in an Alpine valley, or village winding up a green combe towards the highlands above; no terraced town with its harbour full of excursion steamers—scarcely even a village. Stern and rugged the coast line, bald and bare the cliff tops, wild and wind-swept the country that stretches away inland towards the springs of Tamar and Torridge. In the combes alone—they are called *mouths* here—is there foliage, and even there the trees cluster only about the upper end, for the breath of the Atlantic is fierce.

These mouths are the only break in the eternal line of cliff, for of open sandy beach there is little or none. Mile after mile the great walls of rock rise from the breakers, cut through here and there by a deep chine always watered by

a stream. Off the mouth the shore is ever the same, a floor of solid rock with strata tilted on end and worn almost as sharp as the edge of a knife—reefs running out at right angles, “one rasp of which would grind abroad the timbers of the stoutest ship.”

It is calm enough to-day, yet there are not wanting signs of the late storm. The breakers come in with oily roll—

The storm is dead ; but still the deep  
Remembers all the conflict passed ;

nor is the day far distant when the coast folk will again see

The surges hurry from afar  
To lay upon the narrow sand  
The shattered mast, the broken spar,  
An oar, a twisted rudder band.

I doubt if there be any half-mile free from the *débris* of ships that have ended their last voyage on this iron-bound coast.

We have had one of these “mouths” already ; we shall have three or four more ere we reach the last and greatest, the deep combe called Marsland Mouth, down which flows the brook forming the boundary line between Devon and Cornwall. Wild and romantic though they are, they are hard work—I know few walks, for its length, more fatiguing than the tramp along the coast from Hartland to Marsland Mouth. I remember doing the whole distance from Clovelly to Welcombe (which is close to Marsland) in one walk, and I have seldom felt more weary. For, although the *distance* may not be more than eighteen miles, the *labour* is equal to thirty on good turf and ground fairly even, and I recommend future pedestrians to bring up at Hartland Quay, close under St. Nectan’s Church, where, at the foot of the grassy down, is a little inn almost within reach of the spray, and looking out on as wild a view as any in the two western counties.

The Quay is a massive arm of masonry thrust out among the rocks for the protection of the occasional coaster that in fair weather ventures to tempt Providence and the reefs of Hartland. The bottom is none of the best, for, with the exception of a few square yards of sand or shingle, which may alter with the first raking sea, it is of solid rock. And yet a "port" was projected in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and a Bill actually laid before Parliament. But it was never made. Perhaps it is as well that the scheme fell through, for the making of such a port must have been a costly affair, and could never have been a success commercially.

From the quay you will get a striking view of the iron-bound coast, with its dark slate cliffs ribbed with lines of red schist, and its extraordinary contortions, the result of some primeval earthquake. "No words can exaggerate the number and violence of these contortions—sometimes in regular undulating curves, sometimes in curves broken at their points of contrary flexure, and exhibiting a succession of cusps like regular pointed arches—sometimes, though more rarely, thrown into salient and re-entering angles."\*

Resuming our march southward, we soon reach Tor Point, at the eastern boundary of a green valley. From the meadows at the bottom a lofty conical hill, called Catterin Tor, rises abruptly, the landward side covered with furze, the seaward a precipice. On the summit are the remains of a camp or cliff castle, and a position more impregnable it would be difficult to find. From the brow of the next hill we look down upon Spekesmouth, or Spokesmouth, a moorland valley ending in a gorge in the lofty frowning cliffs through which a stream once more flings itself to the shore over a great slab of rock. This,

\* *Vide* a paper contributed by Messrs. Sedgwick and Murchison to the "Transactions of the Geological Society for 1837."

perhaps the finest cascade on the coast, is at least fifty feet high, and against the black glistening wall of rock the spray shows white as snow. At twilight, when the valley is wrapped in shadow, and the moan of the restless sea rises ever louder on the silence of coming night, the spot is weird indeed.

There is a stiff little climb to the top of the cliffs above Spekesmouth, and then, for three miles or more, the walking is easy and pleasant. The summits are of nearly level table-land, the ground rising almost imperceptibly as headland after headland sinks to the sea, each a little loftier than the last. Loftiest of all is Henbury Beacon, where the strata lie in lines so even that at a distance the cliff resembles a great wall of masonry. On the summit are the remains of another cliff castle. This must have been an extensive fortification, and consisted of a triple earthwork. Of the outer there is little left, but the second is complete, and stretches from cliff to cliff in a semi-circular sweep eight feet high. On the outside is a ditch; on the inside, a wide belt of level ground separates it from the third bank, which has a well-defined ditch, and rises to a height of nearly ten feet. Within this, the area, owing to the falling away of the cliff, is very small. The view of the coast is extensive, the whole line of broken precipice right away to Hartland Point being visible, as well as a long stretch of the Cornish shore.

Descending the steep down at the back of the cliff castle, we find another combe yawning before us—Welcombe Mouth. Dark moorlands frame it in; it is deep and wild like an Exmoor valley. At the head, a mile and a half from the sea, the little grey church and scattered cottages of Welcombe village dot the hillside. Welcombe Church, like Hartland, is dedicated to St. Nectan, and "*St. Nectan's well*" gives its name to the valley. It is a church of no

architectural pretension, and contains nothing of interest save an ancient, but very dilapidated, screen and a Norman font. The living was, till recently, held with that of the adjoining Cornish parish of Morwenstow, and at Welcombe on Sunday afternoons would officiate that eccentric genius Robert Stephen Hawker, the parson-poet, whose name, in spite of his oddity, is still a by-word in all the countryside for lovingkindness and Christian charity. Here, as an old inhabitant told me, he was in the habit of turning up half an hour before the time appointed for service, and, after telling his people the week's news, would bargain with them for his corn, poultry, and any other comestibles of which he might stand in need, paying the bill on the Sunday following!

In more than one book I have seen allusions to the swarthy complexions of the women of Welcombe. "Dark grained as a Welcombe woman," says one, "tells its own tale," and we are given to understand that the darkness of their complexion is the origin of the saying. No such idea, however, prevails in Welcombe itself, or, indeed, anywhere in the neighbourhood, and a man who had known the parish all his life told me that he had never heard the "proverb," and denied that the Welcombe ladies were darker than their sisters elsewhere.

There is no inn at Welcombe, and I shall not soon forget with what a sinking of the spirits we heard—at the end of a long day's tramp, too—that there was no sleeping accommodation, and not much of that either, nearer than Morwenstow. "Was there nothing whatever?" we asked, desperately. "Well, you *might* get a bed down to Jollow's." "Where was 'down to,' and who or what was 'Jollow's'?" "Jollow's," it turned out, was a little farm down the combe, half a mile from the sea, and "you couldn't mistake 'un because her wor' the only place down along except the Hermitage, a gennelman's house (and what an



appropriate name), a gunshot below." We struggled on to "Jollow's" to find that Jollow was a man, not a place. A good man, too, for, though he durst not commit himself to the promise of a bed until the return of his "missus," he set before us such fare as was "handy," and we ate, drank, and blessed him. And when the "missus" returned, shortly after dark, she found room for both of us—if one bed can be called "room"—and we slept the sleep of the weary.

Welcombe Valley is known among all the border combes for the great masses of thorn, which, when the year is yet young, lie on the hillsides like drifts of snow. You can see it all as you pass along the road leading to the beach—a road following the banks of the Strawberry Water. The beach, a wild spot, is paved, as usual, with a floor of black rock ribs, running parallel out to sea. Off the cliffs at the southern extremity rises the Gull Rock. Above a bold dark fell towers over the meeting of stream and sea.

A wild spot, as I have said—a spot fit for the doings of one of the greatest scoundrels that ever cheated the Revenue, or lured sailors to a cruel death on the rocks of this pitiless shore. For this district was the haunt of "Cruel Coppinger," who, though little remembered nowadays, was once so notorious that his name even passed into verse:

Will you hear of cruel Coppinger?  
He came from a foreign land;  
He was brought to us by the salt water,  
He was carried away by the wind.

In his paper "Cruel Coppinger" Mr. Hawker tells us that he was a Danish sea captain, that his ship was wrecked off Hartland, and that he was the only survivor. The manner of his appearance was singular. While the crowd who had gathered to the wreck, like eagles to the carcase, more intent, it is to be feared, on plunder than on saving the

lives of their fellow creatures, Coppinger rushed naked into their midst. Snatching her red cloak from an old woman, he threw it round him, and, springing on the horse of a girl who sat looking on, he seized the reins and rode off at full speed.

The girl was so amazed that she offered no resistance—indeed, she may have guessed that the extraordinary conduct of this man cast up by the sea was not without reason. For in those days—it was a hundred years ago—the greed of the wrecker often led to the murder of the wrecked. Dead men told no tales, and, if none of the crew were left, who was to interfere with their plunder? Coppinger probably knew that if he once got into the hands of these lawless characters his life would not be worth many minutes' purchase, and so he chose this desperate method of attempting an escape.

And he succeeded. The frightened horse, bearing his double burden, rushed to Dinah Hamlyn's home, and the kindly farmer took the fugitive in. Here he stayed, and, after awhile, became the husband of the girl whose acquaintance he had made in fashion so extraordinary. But it was a bad thing for poor Dinah. As soon as her father was dead, Coppinger showed himself in his true colours. He took possession of all the dead man's property, and turned the house into a resort for wreckers, smugglers, and ruffians of the worst character. In vain did his wife protest. Coppinger took no notice of her whatever, and, when her mother refused to give up to him her own little fortune, he tied the wretched girl to the bedpost, and threatened to flog her until the money was handed over. The mother of course gave way, and the heartless scoundrel, further enriched by this act of robbery, went on his way unchecked.

Many are the stories told of him. How he beheaded a gauger who dared to interfere with him on the gunwale of

his own boat—how he bought a farm with part of his illicit wealth, and when the lawyer demurred at being paid in foreign gold, told him to take it or go without—how he invited the parson of Kilkhampton (he must have been a queer parson) to dinner, and gave him the dish which he knew he most disliked, and how, when the parson paid him in his own coin and he discovered that the rabbit pie of which he had partaken was *cat*, he thrashed him till he was tired, and finally flung him to the ground with the words, "There, parson, I have paid my tithe in full—never mind the receipt."\*

In these days such conduct of course would not be tolerated for a moment. But a century ago things were very different. This coast, far from any town or populous centre, lay scarcely within the pale of the law at all. Excisemen went in peril of their lives; magistrates knew better than to interfere, unless backed by an armed force. In fact, it is whispered that they were not always averse to a little smuggling themselves, and that many a keg of best French brandy and many a pound of tobacco that never paid duty found its way into the country houses for consumption by the squire and his friends, while his wife or daughter did not say "no"—what woman would?—to a yard or two of Mechlin or Valenciennes. Whether Coppinger kept his Majesty's Justices quiet by gifts, or, what is more probable, by the terror of his name, I do not know, but, for a long time, he went scatheless. But his time was at hand.

His coming had been romantic—his going was hardly less so. Such crimes as his could not for ever remain unpunished, and the toils of the exasperated Revenue officers began to draw closer and closer. Cutters haunted

\* This anecdote is told by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould in his "Vicar of Morwenstow." Mr. Hawker says that he thrashed the parson for speaking of his evil doings.

the coast from Hartland Point to Bude, and Coppinger saw that he must fly. And his manner of disappearing was characteristic. He said not a word to any, but one evening a watcher saw him on the Gull Rock, waving his sword to a vessel in the offing. No one knew whence she came or whither she was bound, but she responded to his signals, a boat was lowered, and Coppinger was seen to descend the crag and embark. The boat reached the vessel, and she disappeared in a moment, vanishing like a ghost at cockcrow. Then arose a frightful storm, and neither man nor vessel were ever seen more. The general opinion was that she foundered with all on board. And so Coppinger went to his account—

He was carried away by the wind.

We are now very near the end of our travels, so far as the north coast is concerned. A cliff pathway winds round the southern headland, and, in another mile, we are at Marsland Mouth, the last valley in Devonshire, the first in Cornwall. Like Welcombe it is deep, but it is wider, with more of oak coppice about the upper end, and with greater sweep of gorse-bespangled down where the chine widens towards the sea. Hidden in deep thickets of hazel and blackthorn, the stream turns and twists on its way towards the beach, the only one, as Kingsley says, where "a landing for a boat is made possible by a long sea wall of rock, which protects it from the rollers of the Atlantic."

Some way up the valley on the northern slope a small thatched cottage is pointed out as the dwelling of the good-natured "white witch" Lucy Passmore, and at the mouth is the cove where lovely Rose Salterne, "slipping off her clothes, stood shivering and trembling for a moment before she entered the sea," magic mirror in hand, and tremulously uttered the incantation which was to throw upon the mirror the face of the gallant who loved her best :

A maiden pure, here I stand,  
Neither on sea nor yet on land ;  
Angels watch me on either hand.  
If you be landsman, come down the strand ;  
If you be sailor, come up the sand ;  
If you be angel, come from the sky,  
Look in my glass and pass me by.  
Look in my glass and go from the shore ;  
Leave me, but love me for evermore.

How the rite was disturbed by landsmen coming down the strand—the fugitive Jesuits and wounded Eustace Leigh—everyone knows, or ought to know. If they do not, they had better read “Westward Ho !” at once. And surely I cannot better end this account of what may be seen along the north coast of Devon than by another quotation from the greatest of our prose epics, which tells in language to which few nowadays can lay claim how one of our coves looks by moonlight :

“She was between two walls of rock ; that on her left hand, some twenty feet high, hid her in deepest shade ; that on her right, though much lower, took the whole blaze of the midnight moon. Great festoons of olive and purple seaweed hung from it, shading dark cracks and crevices, fit haunts for all the goblins of the sea. On her left hand, the peaks of the rock frowned down ghastly black ; on her right hand, far aloft, the downs slept bright and cold.

“The breeze had died away ; not even a roller broke the perfect stillness of the cove. The gulls were all asleep upon the ledges. Over all was a true autumn silence—a silence which may be heard.”

## PART II.

### LUNDY ISLAND.

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#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### A GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

Appearance — Geology — Climate — Fogs — Wrecks — The Islanders — The Island Polity — Cultivation — An "Explosive" Story — Mammalia — Birds — Fishing.

I lay afloat in an idle boat,  
A fisher lad held the oar,  
On a Devon strand and watched the grand  
Old waves rush up the shore.  
Some leagues away old Lundy lay,  
Guarding the middle sea ;  
The sun and mist his low length kissed,  
Yet rugged and cold looked he.

AND such is a fair picture of the distant solitary island that has for so many miles been before our eyes. It lies, a stern barrier, right across the mouth of the Bristol Channel—a long and narrow table-land, varying little in height except towards the northern end, where the surface dips before rising into the bold sloping headland that, covered with a wild "clatter" of granite, looks across to the misty shore of Pembroke.

It is not really low, though in comparison to its length it looks so. But, whether in sun or storm, it is certainly rugged. As seen from the mainland, no smiling pasture greets the eye, no grove of trees breaks the long monotone of its outline, no verdure of oak or ash—at any rate, on the

western side—clothes the great cliffs of granite over which the spray of the Atlantic flies high in the gales of winter. Even on the eastern coast the slopes are seldom relieved by anything higher than bracken, though this covers it in a thick carpet down to the very brink of the cliffs.

It is not a large island—three miles long and, at the widest, a mile across, you may walk round it in a few hours.\* Nine miles and a half, say the islanders, is the length of the track that, following the coast line, runs from Marisco Castle to John o' Groat's and back to the landing place; but the miles are Lundy miles, and what with tor and boulder to be circumvented—not to speak of an occasional patch of bog—none but the man who wishes to establish that abomination of modern days, a "record," will care to do it between breakfast and luncheon. If you wish to enjoy the magnificent scenery to the full, you should take the whole day. And you will not find it too long.

Long and narrow, indented everywhere with coves, the shape of the island is like a hart's-tongue fern. Mr. Gosse compares it to an oak leaf, but it tapers more than an oak leaf does, the breadth gradually diminishing from nearly a mile at the southern end to little more than a quarter at the northern. It is, however, very irregular, and the average breadth may perhaps be taken at half a mile.

The geology is peculiar. With the exception of the south-eastern corner, it is a mass of granite thrust up through the sedimentary rocks, which are now only represented by the clay slate of Lametry and the adjoining islet known as Rat Island. The line of junction is very sharply defined; it runs from the Sugarloaf on the eastern coast to the cove called the Rattles on the southern. No

\* The greatest length on the Admiralty Chart is 2·6 nautical miles, or 3 statute miles, minus 32 feet; its greatest breadth is 0·85 nautical miles, or 168 feet less than the statute mile. (Chanter's "Lundy Island.")

veins of granite penetrate the shale, and, with the exception of a slight induration at the place of contact, there is little alteration, though the granite itself is greatly altered for some ten or twelve feet, changing from grey syenite to hornblende and hornblendic trap of schistose structure.\*

The nearest granitic outbreak of any size is at the Cornish Moors and Dartmoor, nearly equi-distant from the island, the former district being about thirty-five miles away, and the latter a little over forty. The granite of Lundy differs materially from both. There is a scanty supply of schorl, though here and there "thin irregular veins of a fine-grained granite substance (eurite?)" are found traversing the rock. Decomposition is rapid, though this applies only to the coarse-grained variety, some of the stone opened up at the now abandoned quarries on the east coast being of such close, firm texture that it was used in the construction of the Thames Embankment.

Although the shale is not penetrated by the granite, it is, in common with the latter, traversed by narrow dykes of greenstone (on the island called "basalt"), which intersect the whole island from east to west in a very remarkable and regular manner. Locally it is said that there are no less than three hundred and sixty-five of these dykes—"one for every day in the year;" but Mr. Etheridge gives only sixty, which, he says, vary from one foot to thirty feet in thickness.

There was a time when granite was considered the oldest work in Mother Earth's fabric. But the geologist of to-day knows better, and will tell you not only that Lundy slate existed before Lundy granite, but will tell you *why*. He says that the prior existence of the slate is proved by the sharp way in which it is cut off by the intrusive granite even contrary to its line of strike, "instead of being folded

\* Rev. D. Williams. ("Journal Geol. Soc.," 1846.)



or contorted round its base." The slates are compared with those about Ilfracombe and Mortehoe, both in character and appearance, and, like them, they are much plicated and intersected with veins of quartz.

Of minerals there appear to be few, and none worth working. Attempts have been made at working the copper existing at the junction of the slate and granite, but the quantity was too small to give hopes of much profit. In the granite Mr. Hall found small columnar crystals of yellowish white beryl, felspar, fluor (locally called amethyst), garnet, mica, rock crystal, schorl, and china clay, but the latter valueless owing to its impregnation by iron. Traces of sulphuret of zinc, copper pyrites, and magnetic iron ore are found in veins of gossan in the slate, while a radiating zeolite was noticed embedded in fragments fallen from the great greenstone dyke which towers above the landing place.\*

The islanders—by the way, they only muster about three score, all told—claim for the climate of Lundy a superiority over that of the mainland, whether of England or Wales. It is cooler, say they, in summer, and warmer in winter, while there is less rain. This claim is borne out by the register formerly kept by Mr. Heaven, the proprietor of the island, which shows that the temperature is from seven to twelve degrees lower in summer and higher in winter than on the coasts adjacent. With regard to the rainfall, it has been observed that occasionally Lundy appears to divert the course of the clouds, which divide to right and left, pouring their contents upon the coast to north and south, leaving the island clear.†

\* T. M. Hall's paper, "Geology, &c., of Island of Lundy." ("Trans. Dev. Assoc.," iv., 612.)

† Chanter. He says that the comparative equableness of the climate is no doubt owing to the island being exposed to the full influence of the Gulf Stream.

But fogs are very prevalent. They do not so much envelop the whole island as lie upon the upper part in reefs or layers. I have gone out early in the morning to find the lighthouse quite invisible, together with the whole of the surface, while half-way down the hill to the landing place the atmosphere has been perfectly clear, and the entire coast line visible as far as the eye can reach. This phenomenon is probably due to the same cause as that which diverts the rain clouds—namely, the position of the island across the mouth of the Channel, which would create a draught, and keep the lower part free from vapour.

This prevalence of fog on the heights has, of course, the effect of obscuring the lantern of the lighthouse, which stands on or near to the highest point of the island. Indeed, it is, to a great extent, useless. The Trinity Board have accordingly—after a rather long experience of seventy-six years—decided to discontinue the light in its present position, and to erect in its stead two other lighthouses at a lower elevation—one at the north, the other at the south end of the island. Of course there is a fog-signal station, but this is separate from the lighthouse, and placed in a niche half-way down the western cliffs. Anent this, Mr. Chanter makes a remark as amusing as it is naïve. After stating that the amount of fog and cloud has been probably over-rated, he says: "The longest continuous period that the signal gun has been obliged to be fired since its establishment has been seventy-two hours." Rather an unfortunate illustration to bring forward to prove that the Lundy fog is not so terrible an affair after all, and one pities the unfortunate people subjected every ten minutes for three weary days and nights to the sharp report of the rocket. I found it quite sufficient to wake *me*, while further sleep was out of the question. But perhaps the islanders are used to it.

From its position, right in the "fairway" of one of the

most busy estuaries in the world, one would have expected Lundy to furnish a long tale of wrecks. The list, however, is remarkably short. But there is a grim explanation. To the question had they many wrecks, the fisherman replied, "not many *as they knowed of*," adding, that he believed that scores—nay, hundreds—of vessels had foundered off the cliffs, leaving no soul to tell the story. I have myself, in exploring the caves beneath the western precipices, found quantities of wreckage; in one case part of the mast of a ship jammed in a dark crevice, while close by was a fragment of the ornamental scroll work that had once decorated the bow, the gaudy yellow and red paint still bright. Any vessel, in fact, that drives ashore on Lundy has the poorest of poor chances, for, except at the southern end, there is no beach, while the water is deep all round the island.

Small as the population is now, it has been smaller, for a hundred years ago Grose mentions but seven houses and twenty-three inhabitants. But it has also been much greater, being more than double the present number as lately as 1871, while traces of dwellings in various parts of the island prove that at one time it was greater still. And Lundy has been inhabited from a time so remote that no record remains of its ancient people but the sites of certain round towers and their burial places—tumuli and kistvaens—most of which are now levelled with the ground.

They are a kindly, civil race, these Lundy folk, unspoilt by over-education and the thousand and one devices invented by modern thought to "elevate the masses," or, in other words, to persuade them, did they want persuasion, that "Jack is as good as his master." One tourist, says Mr. Chanter, "suggests it as interesting to a sociologist to watch the mode of thought, ideas, and associations which move people whose existence is spent so far from the busy world, yet past which so many thousand vessels are every year sailing." I think the sociologist would

have a quiet time of it. So far as I saw, the Lundy man believes in God, Mr. Heaven, and himself, and of other thoughts, ideas, and associations reckes little.

Mr. Heaven is, in fact—or might be if he chose—almost as much an autocrat as the Czar. The island is his absolute property, and he owes fealty to none. The polity of Lundy is indeed unique. Some, indeed, argue that it forms no part of the realm at all, and, though Mr. Heaven told me that he considers it subject to the laws, both common and statute, it is altogether outside the Customs, so that no duty is payable on any contraband, and it is exempt from all taxes, both imperial and parochial. In fact, it is in no parish, or even county, and, since the Reformation, has been extra-diocesan as well. The proprietor is not only king, but bishop, though, it is hardly necessary to add, he does not arrogate to himself any episcopal functions.

History repeats itself. Three hundred years ago Ralph Holinshed wrote in his "Chronicles" of the island "hyght Lundy" that "of thys islande the Parson is not onelye the Captaine, but hath thereto weife\* distresse and all other commodities belonging to the same." It is curious that the present proprietor is also a "parson," and, if the divine of the days of Elizabeth, who was merely priest of the now ruined church of St. Helen,† was dubbed "Captaine," surely the man who owns the whole island has still more right to the title. There was, and I believe still is, among some people, a wild idea that the owner of Lundy has the power of conferring knighthood; but this is altogether a myth, originating perhaps in the fact of the insular kingship.

Yet, in spite of the island being extra-parochial, the inhabitants are admitted to the Parliamentary franchise. But

\* Waif (P).

† The island when Holinshed wrote (1587) appears to have belonged to the St. Ledgers of Annery, near Bideford.

they have to poll at Woolfardisworthy (!), a parish not even on the seaboard, but well inland at the back of Clovelly. This singular arrangement seems totally inexplicable, unless, as a relative of the proprietor suggested to me, "they want to prevent us voting at all," which seems probable enough, for who would cross fifteen miles of water and three or four of land for the doubtful pleasure of recording a vote? Happy Lundy, free from rates, free from taxes—free even, I suppose, from those exasperating "death duties"! No patient but determined overseer ever knocks at thy doors; the "gas and water" man knoweth thee not! Conservative and Radical may elbow one another at the polling station and shout themselves hoarse at the declaration of the poll, but thou, like Gallio, carest for none of these things. An island of the blest!

But not always such. No island can—as surely Lundy can—lay claim to the term "historical" without having experienced many of the ups and downs of changeable fortune. Lundy has been a nest of pirates—the retreat of an assassin, who attempted the life of a king—the proposed refuge, though he never reached it, of that king's grandson—a stronghold of Royalists—a headquarters of French privateers—a convict settlement. But of these in their place.

Barren as it looks to the casual visitor, the land is fertile enough, and, where properly drained, makes a fair return for the money and labour expended. Under the care of Mr. Heaven and his father much has been done, and now something like one half of the island is under cultivation. With the exception of the proprietor's private grounds, the whole is let to a farmer, in whose employ are most of the men on the island, the fishing being confined to one family, who rent it at £10 a year. The crops are mostly oats, barley, and turnips, and these are cultivated wholly in the southern end of the island, the remainder being

divided by three lines of wall, known as the Quarter, the Half Way, and the Three Quarter Walls, into cattle and sheep runs. Oats do remarkably well, yielding (according to Mr. Chanter) seventy bushels to the acre with six feet of straw, while from eight to twelve roots of swedes will often weigh a hundredweight. Nothing of all this is exported, the crops being grown for the stock only—cattle, horses, sheep, and pigs, of all of which there is a good supply, besides poultry. The beef and mutton are of excellent quality, but the same cannot be said of the pork. A Lundy ham—*me teste*—is not nice. Whether there be any truth in the story that the pigs are fed on sea fowl I did not inquire, but the remark of an acquaintance, "Whatever you do, don't try the ham," received unexpected support when I hit upon a quotation from a manuscript journal written nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. There was this significant note—"The flesh of the hogs bred in the island cannot be eat ; the flesh is yellow and strong." My companion actually declared that it got into his head !

This gentleman, by the way, was the innocent cause of quite a little sensation. Being persuaded (as most people are) that food in Lundy is doubtful both as to quantity and quality, he brought a small supply of his own. Some time after our departure I chanced to meet our landlady, who was "over" for a change. After some conversation she asked: "By the way, what was in that parcel that your friend left in his bedroom?" "Why?" I inquired. "Well," she said, "after you left, his room was taken by an elderly gentleman. He found this parcel and sent for me. 'Mrs. A.,' says he, 'what is this? Don't touch it; it may be an explosive—one cannot be too careful nowadays.' I told him that Mr. P. seemed a quiet sort of a gentleman, and he seemed more satisfied, and presently takes out his knife and cuts a hole in the paper. Out drops two white grains. 'It looks like rice, sir,' says I. He puts a grain in his

mouth, while I tries the other. 'Get rid of it,' says he; 'it's nasty—it's bitter. Here, take some water and rinse out your mouth. And now carry the thing downstairs,' he says, 'but be sure you don't go near the fire, and sprinkle it over the ground outside.' But I wasn't going to do that, so I locked it away till I could find out. Now, sir, what was it?" "*Rice*," I said; "you had better eat it when you get home!"

Not only did the island once boast a larger population, but a wider tract was cultivated. In several places towards the north end there are remains of ancient fences. "That it hath been tilled in former times," says Westcote, writing early in the seventeenth century, "the furrows testify yet plainly, but what commodities came thereof is not known, neither will any man try again; there is so little hope of profit." It is a question, however, whether cultivation might not be extended, for the soil is in most places fairly deep and good, and capable of producing crops that would support a much larger number of sheep and cattle than those found on the island at the present time. The expense of reclaiming the land would not be excessive, and, although the exportation of stock to the mainland presents difficulties, such difficulties are not insuperable, and, as land on Lundy is cheap, the expense of raising and exporting ought to be more than counterbalanced by the price obtained.

The cliffs are honeycombed with rabbit burrows. This animal, indeed, is so plentiful that leave to shoot him is readily granted. The only other mammal is the seal—*Phoca vitulina*, or the grey seal—which is eagerly sought by sportsmen, as much perhaps for the danger attending the hazardous descent over the cliffs as for any other reason. But there is one fine old fellow who cannot be caught. He is called by the islanders "Ponto," and they say he is "as large as a young horse." Occasionally he

may be seen disporting himself in the bay outside the landing place.

And Lundy is the last refuge of the old English black rat, which still inhabits Rat Island; indeed, till about forty years ago it was the only species on the island. Before me is a letter written by Dibdin to the Rev. Dr. Cruwys in which the rats have the honour of being referred to on equal terms with vermin of another species. "In the bay," he writes, "lies the island of Lundy, a place remarkable for nothing but having harboured two sorts of vermin; the crews of petty French privateers, which, from the inaccessibility of the situation, did, in the reign of Queen Anne, incredible injury to our trade, and rats." But the insatiable Norwegian rat has found its way even to Lundy, and bids fair to exterminate the aborigine altogether. The days of *Mus rattus* are numbered. Another rat of a reddish colour and the shrew mouse make up the short list of animals indigenous to Lundy. "No other mice," writes Mr. Chanter, "nor moles, stoats, or other vermin, nor any snakes or reptiles exist on the island." The absence of snakes, say the inhabitants, is due to St. Patrick, who called at Lundy *en route* for Ireland!\*

But of birds there are many varieties, and some are of rare species. Among spring visitants are the rose-coloured pastor and the hoopoe; the peregrine falcon and chough are resident throughout the year; the shallard owl, hooded crow, and snow bunting arrive in autumn and winter, while occasional visits are paid by the golden eagle, the spotted eagle, the erne, osprey (formerly quite common); the marsh, hen, and Montagu harrier; the subalpine warbler, and other birds not often seen on the mainland. But the large species are becoming scarce. For this we have to thank the crews of pilot boats and tugs, who pick them

\* Chanter.



off whenever they get the chance, and who have done more to disturb the bird life of Lundy in the last twenty years than the inhabitants have done in two hundred. In the cold weather woodcock come in numbers, while there are plenty of snipe, plover, wild duck, widgeon, and teal, making the island quite "a paradise for sportsmen."\*

And as for sea birds, the number must be seen to be believed. There are always plenty, but in the breeding season they literally swarm—as one islander put it, "you can scarcely see the sky, sir." The sea is covered with them, the land is covered with them; they sit in regiments and battalions on the ledges of rock. Here—amongst many others—you will see the herring gull, the lesser and great black-backed gull, the kittiwake, cormorant, oystercatcher, guillemot, razor-billed auk, gannet, Manx shearwater, petrel, and puffin, or "Lundy parrot." *Lundi*, the Icelandic name for a puffin, is thought, indeed, to be the origin of the name of the island.

A hundred years ago sea birds were taken in large numbers for the sake of their feathers. As lately as 1816 no less than 379lb. weight of feathers were plucked by the women, though this is nothing to the quantity formerly obtained, which, according to an old writer, amounted annually to between 1700lb. and 1800lb. This industry has now quite fallen into disuse, though a few eggs are still taken and sold to visitors and on the mainland. Although the Lundy boy thinks nothing of it, this employment looks exceedingly dangerous, the collector being lowered over the cliffs to the rocks and ledges where the birds deposit their eggs. In 1780 Mr. Hole, the farmer, fell to the shore and was dashed to pieces, and, quite recently, a little girl, while watching her brother, lost her footing, and when the boy turned to look for her, she was floating in the sea—dead.

\* Chanter, who gives a long list of the birds in an appendix.

It has been noticed that each species of bird has its own breeding and nesting ground. This seems particularly the case with the guillemots and puffins, who occupy different sides of a little bay at the north-west corner of the island. If either bird dares to settle for a moment in the quarters set apart for the other, he is attacked with the greatest ferocity, and is lucky if he escapes with his life.

The fishing, as before stated, is in the hands of one man at a rent. He states that it is fairly good, and his catches are sufficient to keep himself and family. Most of the shellfish are taken to the mainland. As communication is very uncertain, the crabs and lobsters are left in the pots till the time arrives for "hauling" them, the claws being first put out of joint to prevent the captives fighting with and perhaps devouring one another—the lobster, in particular, being a most pugnacious gentleman. It seems cruel, does it not? But, as the fisher boy remarked, "they don't take no notice of it." If eels get used to being skinned, perhaps lobsters do not object to being maimed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ISLAND KINGDOM.

How and Where to Land—An Unpleasant Experience—The *Gannet*—The Parsons' Predicament—The Voyage from Instow—The Landing Place—The Road—Lametry—Rat Island—The Owner's Residence—The Manor House, Church, and School—A Pleasant Service—Kistvaens—A Gigantic Skeleton—The Lighthouse—St. Helen's Church.

“AND albeit there be not scarcelye fourtie householders in the whole, yet the inhabitants there with huge stones (alreadye provided) may keepe off thousandes of theyr enemies, because it is not possible for any adversaries to assaile them, but onelye at one place and wyth a most daungerous entrance.” So writes old Holinshed, and, although Lundy is not quite so inaccessible as all that, still it is a difficult place to get at, and sometimes even more difficult to leave. For the only landing place worthy the name is a shingle beach on the south-eastern side, a little semi-circular bay, which, though open to the easterly gales, is sheltered from the more prevalent westerly and south-westerly by the peninsula of Lametor, or Lametry, and Rat Island. I say the only landing place worthy of the name, for the one on the western side is of little account. For here there is no beach whatever, and only when the sea is quite smooth is it possible for a boat to approach and land passengers at the foot of a shelving precipice, up which they must climb by a break-neck path.

In an easterly gale, however, this difficult path is the only means of getting on to or off the island. For then *the*

landing place is quite inaccessible. In a marvellously short space of time there rises a nasty surf, and woe to the boat that "poops a sea," or gets broadside on to the broken crests. And the sea rises so suddenly, too. I have left Clovelly in a calm, but, before reaching Lundy, have found a sea so heavy that the captain of the steamer refused to allow his boats to be lowered, and we had to be taken off in the fisherman's punt. As we passed to leeward of the steamer, a big sea swept round her stern, and my companion—a sailor, too—remarked: "I think it is about time to take off my mackintosh," and suited the action to the word. I thought so, too, and followed his example. But we did not know our boatman. With one stroke of his oar he brought the boat bow on to the sea, and we floated over in safety. Ultimately he landed us scarcely sprinkled, but I, for one, do not want another such quarter of an hour, and should certainly think twice before venturing to land on Lundy Island in an easterly breeze, even under the charge of a Lundy man.

Of course as long as the east wind continues no one with heavy luggage can leave the island, for the path on the western side wants not only feet, but hands. Again, even if you do get down to the boat, the steamer may not come round to take you off. Still, if you *can* reach the Ilfracombe steamer, which in summer time visits the island twice a week, you are free; if this be impossible, you must take your chance of getting a passage across to Instow in the little cutter which once a week, "when the weather permits," brings the mails. And the *Gannet* is a fine seaworthy craft, commanded, too, by as handsome a son of North Devon as you will find between Glenthorne and Marsland—a skipper tall and straight and sunburnt, with brown beard and clear blue eye that has looked a roaring sou'-wester square in the face many a time between Bideford Bar and Lundy. The *Gannet* sails

from Instow every Thursday with the mails (a *very* light cargo)—oftener, if she can get enough passengers to make it worth while; and, if you prefer a yachting trip to the voyage by steamer, you will find few so pleasant as a passage by the *Gannet*. But remember one thing—a steamer is like a train, more or less punctual; on a sailing vessel can be placed no reliance whatever. It is all very well with a stiff breeze on the quarter, but there are such things as calms, not to speak of contrary tides. I have known the *Gannet* take ten hours doing the twenty-three miles from Instow, and have been a passenger myself when she has taken nearly eight. And the steamer gets there in *two*.

In earlier days, when steam was undreamt of, and no one ever thought of wanting letters, Lundy might, and sometimes did, become a prison for weeks. It is related that on one occasion a party of half a dozen Devonshire parsons started on an excursion to the island, meaning to return well before the following Sunday. But fate ruled otherwise; the wind shifted—and, when Sunday came, half a dozen Devonshire congregations mourned the absence of their pastors. Time went on, and another Sabbath dawned. But the six churches were again empty, and the parsons had rest from their labours. Then there was the bank clerk who, starting on a Saturday to spend Sunday on the island, found himself the sport of the capricious wind. His anguish when he rose on Bank Holiday Monday and found an easterly gale driving the waves far up the beach was really quite distressing. He made up his mind for dismissal, but the manager, I fancy, proved magnanimous. Perhaps he had been on Lundy himself.

But, even if the visitor be cut off from his kind in the flesh, he may still hold converse with them in the spirit. For Lundy has a telephone, and he may "talk" with

Appledore and have any message he likes telegraphed on. But the best laid plans of mice and men fail occasionally, and I have known the telephone break down altogether in a thunderstorm, and we were then cut off from the mainland as completely as if Lundy were an island in the Pacific.

Perhaps enough has been said by way of introduction. Let us now approach the island more nearly and explore its frowning cliffs, its wave-worn caves, its curious natural features, and last, but not least, its interesting ruins and relics of bygone days. The *Gannet* is running up to her peak the flag bearing the crown and the letters R.M., signifying that she has on board the half-dozen letters that constitute Lundy correspondence, and is about to weigh for what a facetious islander calls "the Kingdom of *Heaven*." We will get a boat to put us on board, for the tide is ebbing and the wind is fair, and it will be no ten hours' passage to-day.

With much nautical chanting, the mainsail creaks slowly up the mast; with less labour, but still tunefully, the foresail is set; pipe in mouth, "Cap'n" Dark takes the tiller, the anchor is weighed, and the vessel's head swings round seaward. Instow and Appledore slide astern, then Braunton Lighthouse, then the Pebble Ridge and the sand-hills, and we are ducking to the rollers of the Bar. In a few minutes these, too, are left behind; Baggy Point opens out on the starboard, Hartland on the port bow; the villas of Westward Ho drop astern, and the tower of Northam Church stands out against the sky. Then Morte Point creeps out beyond the yellow sands of Woolacombe, and a minute later the Pharos of Bull Point. The curling waves off the mouth of the estuary settle down into a solemn heave—the pulse of the Atlantic. We are at sea.

Out of the western horizon Lundy rises like a wall, a barrier from four to five hundred feet high set against the onslaught of old Ocean. While we look the *Gannet* skirts

a floating mass of sea birds. The nearer ones dive, but not till the very last moment; those further away take no notice whatever—indeed, half of them appear to be asleep. Looking over the bulwarks one could, if the surface were calmer, trace the course of the guillemots beneath the waves for some distance. They work their wings as much as their legs, and appear, indeed, to be flying under water.

And now streaks of grey appear on the face of the eastern cliffs—the heaps of refuse shot down the slopes from the granite quarries, a scar upon the fair brow of Lundy. Then the lighthouse shows up, a white pillar against the blue sky; Rat Island separates itself from the peninsula of Lametry; and beyond rises the sharp cone of the “Shutter.” “And that is Marisco Castle, sir,” says the skipper, pointing, ten minutes later, to a dark square mass on the cliff above Lametry; “and there, in the hollow, is the Squire’s house, and above, the church and farm—we shall be in in another hour.” And in another hour we *are* “in”—three hours and twenty minutes from Braunton light—and the anchor plunges into the clear green depths, a few cables’ length from the landing place.

Before us, to the right, stretch the great slopes of the “Sidelands”—a glacis of fern and heather—ending abruptly a hundred feet above the sea in precipice. To the left is rocky Rat Island, with its head of greensward and feet of black rock round which the tide swirls like a mill race. Overhead, above the precipice faced with its great dyke of “basalt,” frowns Marisco Castle, for centuries the stronghold of pirate nobles. But, while we are looking, the punt is hauled alongside, in go the ridiculous “mails,” the passengers follow, and in a few minutes we step ashore at the so-called landing place.

This landing place lies at the foot of the precipice, and is, as I have already said, a beach of shingle, or occasionally, after a gale, of boulders, and now and again of bare rock.

When an easterly gale renders landing on this beach out of the question, it is sometimes possible to land at a little cove under Rat Island (which, except at high tide, is not an island at all). But this entails a toilsome ascent by a narrow track over the side of Lametry, and an equally difficult descent to the beach, before the main body of the island can be approached. There is no pier, or sign of a pier, anywhere. Nor is there much life about this landing place. The fisherman and his sons perhaps, hauling their lobster pots; perchance a stray visitor basking in the sun, but no cottage meets the eye. One sees but a limekiln, a coal store hewn out of the solid rock, one or two sheds bleached and weather-beaten, a few boats hauled high and dry up the slipway at the bottom of the road that winds up the cliff slope into the "interior."

This road, the work of the late Mr. Heaven, was the first on the island—and will perhaps be the last. It runs through the hamlet about the manor farm, and on to the cottages of the abandoned granite quarries, after which it resolves itself into a grassy track, and, though it is possible to drive over the whole length to the north end, the experience is scarcely a smooth one, and here and there the "road" almost vanishes altogether.

The peninsula of Lametry is connected with Lundy proper by a sharp ridge of slate. Lametry is a grass-topped hill, rising abruptly from the shore on either side to a height of some two hundred feet. Beneath is a large cavern, occasionally used as a receptacle for goods to be taken away by "Dark's boat." It is called the Devil's Kitchen. And here it may be mentioned that the Ancient Enemy has set his mark on Lundy in fashion most unmistakable. He has his Kitchen, his Limekiln, his Chimney, and his Slide—the latter a tremendous slope of smooth granite in the face of the western cliffs. "What do you know of your Ancient Enemy?" asked a Sunday School



teacher of a Dartmoor peasant. "Please, mum, he lives to Widdicombe," replied the child. A Lundy child surely would be justified in saying: "Please, mum, he lives to Lundy." Among the weed-covered rocks outside the Devil's Kitchen, the cable from the telephone station overhead by Marisco Castle, winds like a metallic snake into the sea.

Rat Island is connected with Lametry by a bank of shingle. The island is full of caves and fissures; we can almost see the one nearest us from the landing place. At the extreme western corner, as we approach it, the light shines through a hole—it can scarcely perhaps be called a cave—in the cliff, a hole that at a distance looks like an "eyelet" hole, but which is in fact quite large enough to admit the body of a man. In fact, I have passed through it myself. Further on there is a cavern, or tunnel, penetrating the island from one side to the other. The length must be about three hundred feet, and the height perhaps thirty. Except to those who choose to wade, the passage is impassable, as the floor is very uneven, and several pools stretch from side to side. At high tide it is full of water, and one can imagine the hurly-burly in its recesses when the sea enters driven by an Atlantic gale. What a rush, what a roar, what a thundering echo along the roof, what flying clouds of spume!

To return to the landing place—or, rather, to the road leading from it to the top of the island. At the bottom of the ascent, by the limekiln, is a large whitewashed slab of granite inscribed—"T.H. Landing Place 1819." The initials of course stand for the name of the late proprietor,\* and the date is that of the construction of the road and slipway. The road, a really creditable piece of

\* This is not Mr. Heaven's title. I am not aware that he has one. Still some designation must be given him as an alternative to his name. The islanders call him the "Squire."

engineering, is cut in the face of a precipitous slope some four hundred feet high, and is the successor to a bridle path, once the only approach to the summit. The declivity is covered thickly with bracken, bramble, and heather, while here and there a cluster of honeysuckle waves in the breeze, or falls gracefully over the brow of some rugged crag. Along the seaward side runs a low wall, a very necessary protection, for any vehicle falling over would meet with certain destruction. Here and there, in a recess among the rocks, an oak or two has managed to struggle into existence, and, below the first bend, there is quite a respectable pine. But, as a rule, the island is treeless, and it is only in the combe above that trees exist in any number.

In this combe—Millcombe it is called, because there was once a mill there—is the Villa, Mr. Heaven's house. As we turn the corner it comes into view, a small, bare-looking mansion, covered with stucco the better to keep out the lashing rains, and with old-fashioned narrow paned windows, for plate-glass would never do on Lundy. At the back the combe head sweeps round in a bold semicircle, and below the line of furze and heather are winding walks, and a semi-wild garden or shrubbery gay with hydrangeas—a plant which, in the moist atmosphere of Lundy, flourishes exceedingly. On the left the house finds additional shelter from a grove of oak and ash, all, I believe, planted by the present proprietor or his father. Over this, on the brow of the combe, appears the spire and east end of the little iron church in which every Sunday afternoon Mr Heaven himself ministers to the spiritual wants of his subjects. Near it is the school where the "Squire's" sister teaches, or, at any rate, used to teach. A terrace runs along the front of the house, and below this the ground falls rapidly to the entrance gates and the kitchen garden.

This garden speaks eloquently to the power of the

wind. Besides being surrounded by a stone wall, it is subdivided into three parts by other walls of the same height. Without this precaution Mr Heaven would get very few vegetables, for the easterly winds cut nearly everything to pieces. Indeed, a Lundy gale has been known, not only to strip the ground of every plant upon it, but even to rip up the turf and lay bare the solid rock ! I myself have seen the rain rebound from the outer walls of this garden in clouds of spray.

Turning from the house and passing the Bungalow, a picturesque cottage—as far as anything built of corrugated iron *can* be picturesque—inhabited by a manservant, the road reaches the brow and turns sharp across an open field to the Manor House—which is the island farm and store—and cottages adjacent. Here we shall be glad to refresh ourselves after our voyage, for, short though it has been, the sea air is a wondrous appetiser. The Manor House, moreover, is the Lundy “Hotel,” and here you may have bed and board for a very moderate charge indeed.

It is the largest dwelling on the island. In it, and in the row of labourers’ cottages at the back, live more than half the population. It forms the nucleus of the only hamlet—if hamlet it can be called—the only other inhabited houses being those belonging to the lighthouse people, the signalman, and a couple of cottages out towards the quarries. The store is the general shop. Here the islanders can get all the necessaries of life and a few of its luxuries. Here also are retailed beer and spirits (for which no licence is required, except permission from Mr. Heaven)—in short, the store is the Lundy bar and lounge.

In our ascent we have worked round to the back of the villa, which now lies beneath our feet in the depths of the combe, so that the church and school face us. Both are small, but the latter is no larger than a sitting-room. Still it is quite large enough to accommodate the few children

on Lundy. I well remember the scene there one Sunday afternoon. Mr. Heaven, having met with an accident, was unable to conduct the usual service in the church, and a layman visitor, zealous for good works, came to the rescue. The islanders assembled in force, and the room was full. It was a perfect day, warm and sunny, and from my seat, near the open door, I could look down the slopes of the combe, shaggy with gorse and fern, to a sea of deepest green-blue, scarcely marked by a ripple. Far away the white sails of a barque gleamed pearly through the autumn haze, and a gull wheeled lazily over the cliffs. I had scarcely taken it all in when a hymn was given out, and the voice of Thomas, the fisherman, rose mightily as he led his fellow islanders. There was no one to play the harmonium, but everyone did his best. All joined in—the “Squire’s” party from the house, a visitor or two, the people from the farm, the lighthouse keepers, the labourers, their wives and daughters. As for our layman, he gave us just the sermon for the place and occasion, plain and to the point, and, out of consideration to our infirmities and the lovely weather, not too long. And, as we filed out into the sunlit air and wound round the brow of the combe, one of us at least thought that a service in Lundy schoolroom, despite the want of ritual, was quite as beneficial, if not outwardly so attractive, as “evensong” in some stately church on the mainland, interpreted by the aid of Gregorian music and all the glories of a surpliced choir. But, alas! we are feeble creatures, and hunger for “some new thing.” Perchance such a service, often repeated, would cease to appeal to us as it did on that August afternoon, and we should crave for stained glass, cassock, and organ.

A large area at the back of the farm is covered with outbuildings, not in the best condition—in fact, they look as though they had been put up with a view to greater agricultural developments than have as yet made their appear-

ance and then neglected. They are all, as is the Manor House itself, of modern date—some, indeed, erected within the last few years. It was while some of these “improvements” were in progress that the workmen made a curious discovery. While digging foundations for the wall of the rickyard, they came upon a pair of kistvaens, or stone coffins, built of granite, and each covered with a large slab. The larger grave was 10ft. in length, and provided with a lump or pillow of granite, hollowed out for the reception of the head of a gigantic skeleton which lay within. The feet rested on another block. The smaller cist, which also contained a skeleton, was but 8ft. long, and differed from the other in having no head or foot rest. Both were covered with a pile of limpet shells.

Mr. Heaven was sent for, and the skeletons carefully measured. The larger had a stature of 8ft. 2in. Mr. Heaven was present the whole time, and not only saw the measurement taken, but, as he himself told me, saw one of the men place the shin-bone of the skeleton against his own, when it reached from his foot half-way up his thigh, while the giant’s jaw-bone covered not only his chin, but beard as well. The skeleton in the smaller cist, although that of a very tall person, was thought little of beside that of the giant. Mr. Heaven, who has some knowledge of anatomy, considered it to be that of a woman.

Close by seven other skeletons were discovered, but these were of ordinary stature, and buried without stone coverings. At the end of the line lay a great quantity of the bones of men, women, and children, buried in one common grave. Some glass and copper beads and one of gold were found with these bones, and a few fragments of pottery. Some of these were preserved, and the bones were then covered up.

As Mr. Chanter says, “it is most difficult to assign an era or to account for this sepulture ; the remains of women

and children precluding the idea of its betokening the slain in battle, but rather the indiscriminate slaughter of an entire population." Still, as he points out, this does not explain the peculiar character and contents of the kistvaens. These he refers to the Celtic period. But did the Celts produce such giants as the pair interred in these stone coffins? I fancy not. Mr. Heaven exclaimed, when he saw the larger skeleton, "the bones of Hubba the Dane!" \* and the proportions are certainly rather Scandinavian than Celtic. Undoubtedly it was the custom of the Danes to remove their more honoured dead, and Lundy was "the nearest point to which the defeated army and ships could retreat." †

A rough road leads from the Manor House to the lighthouse, about three furlongs distant. It stands on ground rising a little above the table-land—an elevation dignified rather absurdly with the name of Beacon Hill. It is said to be the highest point on the island, five hundred and twenty-five feet above the sea. The tower rises another eighty. It has two lights; the upper revolving once in sixteen minutes, with flashes every two minutes; the lower, which casts a steady stream of light westward, is fixed. The former light is visible to a great distance, probably more on account of its elevation than for its brilliancy, though this is very great. I have heard that the lantern is the loftiest about the British coasts, and that it may be seen from the level of the sea for thirty miles.

To the east of the lighthouse and within a few yards of the keepers' houses is the burial ground and the remains of the ancient church of St. Helen. This burial ground is of great antiquity, and, although tombs are not numerous, the islanders have been buried there from time immemorial, as well as many a victim of the sea. It is a wild God's acre, and, though surrounded by a dry stone wall, is swept by every

\* Vide under Appledore.

† Chanter.

wind that blows, while over the part beyond the graves bracken rustles in the gale.

Though the walls have sunk to low grass-covered mounds, the shape of the church is still distinct. The entrance was on the south. Its dimensions are 25ft. 7in. by 12ft. 9in. Within the walls are the graves of the Heaven family. According to tradition, Lord Saye and Sele—of whom later—was also buried there, beneath the west window. It is somewhat singular that the tenant, Mr. Hole, who dug up his supposed bones (which he deposited without the walls), should have shortly after been laid in the same grave.

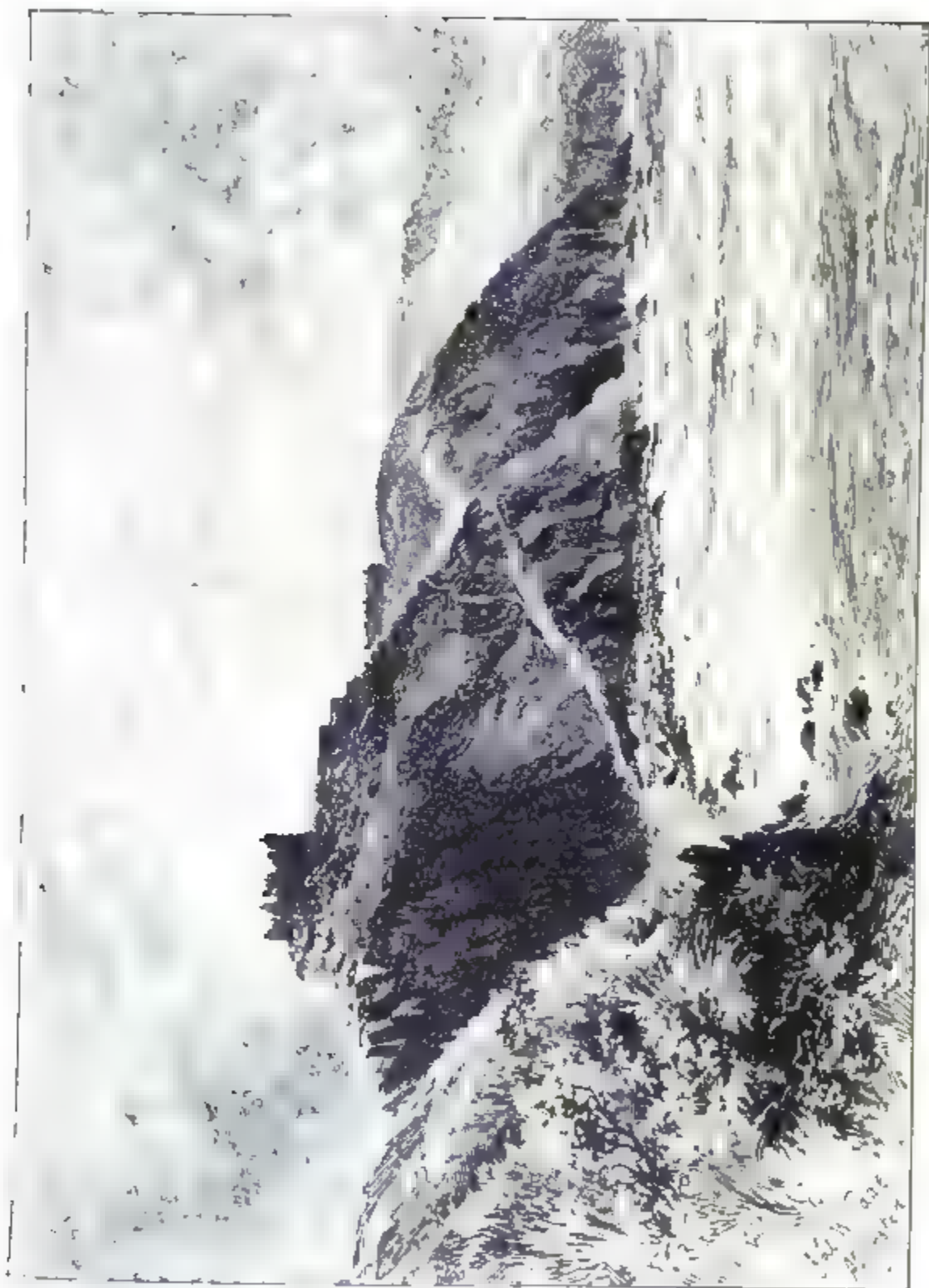
The ecclesiastical history of Lundy is somewhat barren, and no certain date can be assigned to the erection of this church. One authority states—on what grounds I know not—that it was dedicated to St. Helena by Offa, King of Mercia. The remains, however, cannot date from so early a period as the eighth century; the church is much more likely to have been built about the end of the thirteenth, when Sir Geoffrey Dinan, Lord of Hartland, came into possession of the island. At any rate, it is reasonable to suppose that either he or the monks of that rich and powerful abbey would have done something for the spiritual wants of the islanders, and, as Mr. Chanter suggests, these wants were no doubt attended to by one of the brethren. The monks, however, did not officiate long. Dinan only held the island for about five years, and in the reign of Edward the Second it appears to have become a parish, for in the Exeter Diocesan Registers, under date of June, 1325, there is an entry showing that Walter le Bot was presented to the church of St. Helen of "Londai" by Hugh le Despenser. But after some thirty years the registers are silent, and all we know is that at the suppression of the monasteries the patronage of the rectory of Lundy belonged to Cleve Abbey. Probably from this

time regular services ceased to exist, and, although the church was used till the middle of the last century, there were no priests of Lundy, except such as the lord of the island for the time being may have seen fit to supply. It is lucky for the islanders that Mr. Heaven is a clergyman. Had he been a layman, and careless of such matters, Lundy might have been without any religious ceremonial at all.



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MARISCO CASTLE, LUNDY ISLAND. FROM A SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FROM MARISCO CASTLE TO JOHN O' GROAT'S.

Marisco Castle—The Mariscos—A Turbulent Race—Dispenser and Edward the Second—A Nest of Pirates—Benson's Cave—Benson and his Villainies—The Rattles—The Seals' Cave—The Devil's Limekiln—The Shutter—Wreck of the Galleon—Friar's Garden—Quarter Wall—The Earthquake—The Punchbowl—The Cheeses—Jenny's Cove—The Gladstone Rock—The Round Tower—The Devil's Slide—John o' Groat's.

AT the southern end of the field through which the road passes to the Manor House, just where it bends downwards to the combe, is a wicket gate in the stone wall. This opens on to a footpath leading to Marisco Castle, the most interesting building on the island. No two objects on Lundy can be very far apart, and a walk of about seven minutes will bring us to the grim shell of what was once one of the most dreaded fortalices in the West of England.

Marisco Castle stands close to the brink of the most perpendicular precipice on the island, a sheer wall of rock with a face almost smooth, so even is the dyke of greenstone laid like a slab against it. This dyke cuts right through the narrow neck, and on the western side may be seen beneath the water running out to sea. The castle now consists of a building which was, I suppose, the keep. It is nearly square, with a frontage of about sixty feet to the south-east, and it is some twenty-five feet in height. At each corner is a round turret, or its remains, and the battlements can still be traced, though the spaces between have long since been filled in with masonry. The wall at

the basement is said to be nine feet thick, and the whole building, even after the lapse of many centuries, has an appearance of great strength.

On the platform in front, which is defended by a wall more or less ruinous, are the remains of three small rectangular buildings, which appear to have been inhabited, if not built, by the notorious Benson and his servants, while his convicts were quartered in the castle itself.\* In the centre of the platform stand the hut and flagstaff of the signalman, and—strange juxtaposition of antiquity and modern enterprise—the poles carrying the telephone wire may be seen passing inland to their terminus at the store behind the Manor House. From this platform the outer wall of the fortress runs along the edge of the cliff northwards for some two hundred feet to a deep ditch which skirts the wall along that part of the cliff where the fall of the ground is less abrupt than elsewhere. At intervals the line of wall is broken by small square chambers pierced with loopholes—apparently for sentinels. There are traces of a similar wall along the slope on the western side of the castle, where there are also other ruins. The landward defences have disappeared, but Mr. Chanter says that “there appears to have been a barbican or outer tower to protect the entrance on the land side.”

Within, the scene is dismal in the extreme. The interior has been divided up into cottages, now empty and dilapidated. They are built against the walls, leaving a small space or quadrangle vacant in the centre to which entrance is gained by a rickety gate. By these vulgar innovations the appearance of the castle has been so altered that it is impossible to judge the original plan. Nothing of much interest is to be seen with the exception of the old stone stairs which now do duty for one of the cottages.

Of the date of the erection of Marisco Castle no record

\* See next chapter.

exists. It is probably seven hundred years old at the very least, for we know that it was held in the reign of Henry the Second by one Jordan de Marisco. This Sir Jordan was a scion of the noble house of Montmorency, or, as the English and Irish branches were called, Monte Marisco or de Marisco, a family of power and position under the Plantagenet kings. Jordan himself was related to the Royal Family, having married the daughter of Henry's natural brother, Hamelin Plantagenet. He appears, however, to have been a troublesome subject, and Henry, by way of punishment, gave his island to the Knights Templars, whose memory is still perpetuated in the grim Templar Rock—a wonderful likeness to a human face—on the east side of the island. But the Templars cared not for Lundy, and Marisco bid the King defiance. In 1199, Sir William, Sir Jordan's son, openly rebelled, and King John retaliated by confirming his father's grant. But again the monk-knights did nothing towards obtaining possession, apparently preferring a money payment instead, as, fourteen years later, we find it recorded that the Treasury awarded them £10 for the island, and in 1220 a further sum of a hundred shillings "in lieu and full recompence for it." So little was Lundy valued in those days.

Meanwhile, Sir William de Marisco enjoyed himself after the fashion of the turbulent nobles of that turbulent time, raiding the coasts adjacent, and mocking at all attempts to dispossess him. Aids were levied upon the counties of Devon and Cornwall for the siege of Lundy, and for the defence of the ports and harbours against this obstreperous knight, but apparently without result, there being no evidence that *Gulielmus de Marisco*, as he is called in the records, was actually dispossessed, or, indeed, much hindered in his doings. Finally he went over to the French, whose king—Louis—was fitting out an armament

to enforce his demands upon the English Crown. He was captured in the naval engagement of August 24, 1217, when Hubert de Burgh, the justiciary, with but forty ships, scattered a fleet nearly double that number off Calais. But, instead of hanging him as a traitor, he was, for some inscrutable reason, forgiven, and returned in triumph to his island eyrie. Yet he showed his gratitude by again revolting, was fined three hundred marks, and deprived of his island—whether nominally or actually I cannot tell—until the fine was satisfied.

The next Marisco—Geoffrey—was little better. But his reign was short, and he fell at Kilkenny in a descent on Ireland. To him succeeded the greatest ruffian of all—another William—who, although a younger son, appears to have taken possession. This was the gentleman whom the chronicler Thomas Wyke, Canon of Oseney, dubbed pirate,\* and to piracy he added, or endeavoured to add, murder. For one night, as King Henry lay at Woodstock, a man, disguised as a clerk, forced his way into the palace, and, after slaying a priest in the King's presence, would have slain the King himself had not assistance been at hand. This is one account; another† relates that he stumbled by chance upon the bedchamber of one of the Queen's maids of honour, whose shrieks led to his detection and capture. At his execution the assassin confessed himself to be the emissary of de Marisco, and died glorying in his crime, "not caring," as Holinshed says, "what had become of himself so he might have dispatched his purpose."

The crime was fatal to de Marisco. The timid King, fearful that another attempt would be made, urged on by his nobles and moved by the complaints of merchants whose cargoes were seized, as well as by the lamentations

\* "*Gul. de Mareies pyratiam exercens occupavit Lundey,*" &c. (Chanter, p. 62.)

† Matthew Paris.

of the people living along the seaboard of the Bristol Channel, ordered the capture of the island stronghold by fair means or foul. Fair means not prevailing, the island was taken by stratagem, and Sir William and sixteen of his followers seized and executed. The end of this pirate noble was ignominious to the last degree. He was dragged from Westminster to the Tower, and there hung, his bowels drawn and burnt, and the quartered body sent to the four principal cities of the kingdom. Thus ended the reign of these corsairs of the Severn Sea. Lundy was declared forfeited to the King, and Henry de Traci appointed Keeper.

The subsequent history of the castle is the history of the island. It was held for the King by various persons—a descendant of the Mariscos even holding it for awhile—until the reign of Edward the Second, when it became the property of the favourite, Hugh le Despenser. When the last chapter in the life of that unhappy monarch opened—when, deserted by Isabella and hunted down by the Barons, he sought a refuge—his thoughts turned to Lundy.

To Londi, which in Sabrin's mouth doth stand,  
Carried with hope (still hoping to find ease),  
Imagining it were his native land,  
England itself; Severn, the narrow seas,  
With this conceit (poor soul!) himself doth please.  
And sith his rule is over-ruled by men,  
On birds and beasts he'll king it o'er again.

'Tis treble death a freezing death to feel,  
For him on whom the sun hath ever shone;  
Who hath been kneeled unto, can hardly kneel,  
Nor hardly beg what once hath been his own.  
A fearful thing to tumble from a throne!  
Fain would he be king of a little isle;  
All were his empire bounded in a mile.

Accompanied by the son of his favourite, he travelled in haste to Chepstow, and thence sailed down the Wye for the

- Bristol Channel. But Lundy was more difficult to reach then than now, and the royal fugitive got no further than Neath. Soon after both he and Despensers met their deaths at the hands of Mortimer, the Queen's paramour, and Lundy once more reverted to the Crown.

From this time forward the island passed to various grantees of the Crown, most of them well known in the history of their country, but for whom no place can be found here. "In most instances," writes Mr. Chanter, "it was held almost as a sovereignty under absolute grant from the Crown, or by military tenure, it being rated as the tenth of a knight's fee . . . but there is no distinct evidence when it became a fee simple Fief (as it is now) transmissible by descent or mere deed of transfer."

I am afraid that the lords of Lundy were not only "non-resident," but cared very little about their possession, for, early in the seventeenth century, Marisco Castle once more became a nest of pirates. These miscreants haunted the mouth of the Channel and captured vessel after vessel. They were of all nationalities—the scum of the seas. One of them, a Captain Salkeld, actually annexed the island, calling himself king. Among these pirates, though not of them, there dwelt a man once of good position, but now despised as a traitor. This was Sir Lewis Stukeley, the man who betrayed Sir Walter Raleigh to his death. Sick of life, and sinking beneath the weight of public scorn, he retired to Lundy and there died.

The pirates got worse, and ultimately men-of-war had to be sent to convoy the shipping up Channel. Then Charles the First appointed Thomas Bushell Governor, who not only drove off the pirates, but held the island for the King, when a year or two later he fell out with his Parliament. Then Lundy was claimed by Lord Saye and Sele as his property, and the Parliament summoned Bushell to surrender. Bushell submitted the matter to the



King, who, in effect, told him to do as he liked,\* and Bushell gave in. But by-and-by Cromwell's shadow fell upon Lord Saye, and, disgusted at having to acknowledge him master, he retired to his island and there spent the remainder of his days in voluntary exile. The story of the discovery, or supposed discovery, of his remains I have told already.

So Lundy again reverted to piracy, and became the pest of all mariners bound to or from "Bristowe." Many are the tales told of the doings of these buccaneers—one in particular will be found related further on. But the history of Lundy is reaching a length never intended. After passing into the possession of the Gowers, the Warrens, the Palks, and the Clevelands of Tapeley near Instow, the island kingdom was purchased by Sir Vere Hunt, whose son sold it to John Maltravers and W. Stiffe. From them it was bought by Mr. Heaven, the father of the present proprietor.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marisco Castle not only occupied a position of great natural strength, but commanded an extensive stretch of coast. Of the island itself, it overlooks the whole of the southern and south-western end—Lametry Peninsula, Rat Island, the landing place, and the bay called the Rattles, where an enemy, more than usually daring, might possibly have been tempted to scale the broken cliffs. Looking northward, the warder had beneath his eye more than half the eastern shore from the landing place to the Gull Rock off Tibbett's Hill, one of the loftiest points of the island, and itself apparently fortified, though whether by the Mariscos or some other and earlier race we cannot tell. For hard by are the remains, or, rather, the site, of one of those mysterious round towers which have excited a greater

\* *Vide* the correspondence in Chanter's "Lundy Island."

amount of discussion, and have been the subject of more critical research, than almost any other monument of the "dark ages."

Immediately beneath Marisco Castle, on the very brink of the cliff, is a large chamber hewn out of the rock. A wall of granite masonry supporting a great slab forms the entrance. The chamber is about sixty feet in length by six in width, and perhaps double that in height, and was no doubt connected in some way with the castle, either as a store or possibly as a dungeon, though for the latter purpose it seems rather large. Locally it is known as Benson's Cave.

This Benson was tenant of the island in 1748, under lease from the then owner, Lord Gower. He was a well-to-do Bideford man, and at one time sat in Parliament as member for Barnstaple. Among his other speculations, he took up a contract for the transportation of convicts, but, instead of conveying them to the plantations in America, he landed them on Lundy. By day they worked as his servants in building walls, and executing other improvements; at night he shut them up in Marisco Castle. He thus saved the expense of labourers, and might have thriven had he not added smuggling to his sins. For this he was heavily fined and his estate near Bideford estreated in default of payment.

Benson went rapidly from bad to worse. Amongst other little villainies, he insured a vessel's cargo, and then caused her to be put back to Lundy, where he stored the cargo—probably in the very cave that bears his name—and then had the ship scuttled and claimed the insurance money! The matter, however, leaked out; the captain and his confederate were hung, and Benson had to fly to Portugal. So ended the career of the last scoundrel of Marisco.

And now, with a parting glance at the wild scene below, we must turn our backs on the old ruin and take our way

towards the western cliffs. In a few minutes we reach the Rattles, framed in a glorious amphitheatre of purple slopes, rough with rock, and descending at a sharp angle to the sea. Here the shale ends and the granite begins. At the junction, some holes in the cliff mark the spot where a trial was made for copper—a trial that, as I have already said, resulted in success so limited that the undertaking had to be abandoned.

Beneath, at the western end of the cove, is the Seals' Cave, the headquarters on Lundy of *Phoca vitulina*. It is possible at low water to reach it from above, but the scramble is not without danger, and it is much better to take a boat, though the cave must only be approached in calm weather. I once rowed completely round the island, and on this occasion paid a visit to the cavern. The tide, however, was high, and, as we were without candles, we did not feel disposed to penetrate far into the pitch-dark recesses. Even a seal, timid as he is, is not a desirable personage to encounter in the dark, and old "Ponto" might have given us a very nasty nip. A strong animal odour issued from the vault within, and the place was altogether so dark and uncanny that we were glad to back the boat out into the sunlight.

Mr. Chanter describes the cave as a vault sixty feet in height and twelve in width, opening through a narrow passage into a large and lofty chamber to which the animals resort. As many as five have been shot there at one time by adventurous sportsmen, which is a good record, as the seal, when disturbed, at once makes for the water, and will dive beneath the boat and be out to sea before you know that he is anywhere near. The natives, by the way, have the most exalted idea of the ferocity of these creatures. One youth actually told me that they had been seen to take up large stones in their "flippers" and hurl them at the head of an intruder, and that they would "bite

your legs like anything." Their biting habits are likely enough, but I very much doubt whether any seal on Lundy or elsewhere could seize, much less throw, a stone. What has given rise to the idea is this : The seal has undeniably great power in his flippers, and, as he scuttles towards the water, he will send the pebbles flying in a shower *behind* him. It is quite possible then that a person following too closely *may* get a nasty blow from some flying pebble—in fact, I am assured that a powerful seal has been known to drive a stone to the rear eight or ten yards.

Beyond this cave we come suddenly upon one of the greatest natural curiosities in the island—the Devil's Limekiln. Some fifty feet below the brow of the table-land, in the midst of a dark, barren slope where the very stones seem bleached, yawns a great chasm. In shape it is like an inverted cone or wedge (being nearly square at the top), tapering to a fissure at the bottom. The mouth is about seven hundred feet in circumference, but the boulder-strewn floor cannot be more than twenty feet across, and perhaps sixty in length. The depth appears to be about three hundred feet. With its sheer walls of granite and dark, shadowy depths difficult to fathom, the Devil's Limekiln is a strange, weird place, and no one will think the name inappropriate.

The door to the Limekiln is on the north-western side, inside the Shutter Rock—a great cone of granite joined to the mainland by a narrow ridge. There used to be another entrance on the south side of the Shutter, but this is now blocked by great masses of rock, so that nothing can enter but sea birds.

But the north-western entrance—which you can see when looking into the abyss—is accessible by boat, though, of course, only in calm weather. Even then the adventure is not unattended with risk. An acquaintance told me that he had just landed, when, happening to look outward, he

was horrified to see a ground sea approaching. He shouted to the men in the boat to back out at once from among the rocks. They were only just in time, and my friend had to remain a prisoner until the sea subsided as suddenly as it had arisen and permitted the boat to return.

The other entrance is impressive, too, though in a different way. Through an opening in the boulders a blue light streams down upon the water without as it sucks, sucks against the walls of the cave through which the chasm was formerly accessible, and plays in ghastly gleams upon the transparent tide. It is sad, too, for high up among the giant *débris* we found wedged the wreckage of a ship that had probably foundered off this terrible coast, leaving no soul to tell the tale. But how furious must have been the storm that not only drove the fragments into this cleft of the rocks, but actually jammed them between the boulders!

The Shutter Rock gets its name from a local saying that if turned over and tilted into the Devil's Limekiln it would exactly fit the chasm, and it certainly looks as if it would. This is the scene of the wreck of the great Armada ship in "Westward Ho!" though how she could have gone ashore *between* the Shutter and the land, seeing that the isthmus joining it to the island is at least a hundred feet high, is a mystery. But the account of the wreck and of the judgment which fell upon "the great proud sea captain" is one of the finest pieces of writing in the language, and I make no apology for introducing it here.

"On they swept, gaining fast on the Spaniard.

" 'Call the men up and to quarters; the rain will be over in ten minutes.'

"Yeo ran forward to the gangway; and sprang back again, with a face white and wild——

" 'Land right ahead! Port your helm, sir! For the love of God, port your helm!'

"Amyas, with the strength of a bull, jammed the helm down, while Yeo shouted to the men below.

"She swung round. The masts bent like whips; crack went the foresail like a cannon. What matter? Within two hundred yards of them was the Spaniard; in front of her, and above her, a huge dark bank rose through the dense hail, and mingled with the clouds; and at its foot, plainer every moment, pillars and spouts of leaping foam.

"'What is it—Morte? Hartland?'

"It might be anything for thirty miles.

"'Lundy!' said Yeo. 'The south end! I see the head of the Shutter in the breakers! Hard-a-port yet, and get her close-hauled as you can, and the Lord may have mercy on us still! Look at the Spaniard!'

"Yes, look at the Spaniard!

"On their left hand, as they broached-to, the wall of granite sloped down from the clouds toward an isolated peak of rock, some two hundred feet in height. Then a hundred yards of roaring breaker upon a sunken shelf, across which the race of the tide poured like a cataract; then amid a column of salt smoke, the Shutter, like a huge black fang, rose waiting for its prey; and, between the Shutter and the land, the great galleon loomed dimly through the storm.

"He, too, had seen his danger and tried to broach-to. But his clumsy mass refused to obey the helm; he struggled a moment, half hid in foam; fell away again, and rushed upon his doom.

"'Lost! lost! lost!' cried Amyas madly, and, throwing up his hands, let go the tiller. Yeo caught it just in time.

"'Sir! Sir! What are you at? We shall clear the rock yet.'

"'Yes,' shouted Amyas in his frenzy; 'but he will not!'

"Another minute. The galleon gave a sudden jar, and

stopped. Then one long heave and bound, as if to free herself. And then her bows lighted clean upon the Shutter.

"An awful silence fell on every English soul. They heard not the roaring of wind and surge; they saw not the blinding flashes of the lightning; but they heard one long ear-piercing wail to every saint in Heaven rise from five hundred human throats; they saw the mighty ship heel over from the wind, and sweep headlong down the cataract of the race, plunging her yards into the foam, and showing her whole black side even to her keel, till she rolled clean over and vanished for ever and ever.

"'Shame!' cried Amyas, hurling his sword far into the sea, 'to lose my right, my right! when it was in my very grasp! Unmerciful!'

"A crack which rent the sky, and made the granite ring and quiver; a bright world of flame, and then a blank of utter darkness, against which stood out, glowing red-hot, every mast and sail and rock, and Salvation Yeo, as he stood just in front of Amyas, the tiller in his hand, all red-hot, transfigured into fire; and behind, the black, black night."

It is—is it not?—a fine description, and, with the exception of the fact that there is no water between the Shutter and the island, we can, looking down from the "sloping wall of granite," imagine the whole scene. For where the Armada ship really did go down is almost beneath our feet—the roaring tide race between the Shutter and the Black Rock, a venomous-looking crag two hundred yards out to sea. Here the great galleon might very well have been rolled over and over like a log, for, even in the calmest weather, there is a heavy surge in the water—I have been through it myself—and it requires some skill to pilot even a small boat through the narrow, rock-beset passage.

Turning now directly northward, we reach the first of the many little streams with which Lundy abounds. This,

one of the smallest, is a tiny runnel, which, after a course of a few hundred yards at the most, disappears beneath the grass and water plants in a hollow near the edge of the cliffs. Close to where it returns to Mother Earth the ground is rent, parallel with the coast line, into some deep fissures, apparently the result of a landslip, though the islanders attribute the disturbance, as well as the greater subsidence further north, to the earthquake of Lisbon!

The cultivated land adjacent is known as the Friar's Garden, and was at one time, as the name implies, attached to the ancient church of the island. When the father of the present proprietor came into possession, this piece of land was inclosed by an old fence in the shape of a coffin. Like the mummy at the Roman feast, it would seem as though the shape were intentional—to remind the good man that he, too, was mortal. Greatly to Mr. Heaven's annoyance, the fence, during his absence on the mainland, was removed, and the Friar's Garden thrown into the ploughland adjoining.

Beyond the lighthouse the coast runs out into a succession of short promontories or headlands, generally crested with low tors which overlook tremendous declivities strewn with rock. Rather more than half-way down one of these cliff slopes is the station for the fog signal. This station, which is approached by a zigzag road, is the last human habitation we shall meet with as we press onward towards the first of the fences that cross the island—the Quarter Wall, built by Benson's convicts. North of this boundary Lundy is one stretch of moorland, in autumn a sheet of russet fern, yellowing grass, and purple heather. A gunshot beyond, close to the cliff edge, we shall come upon half a boat placed on end and furnished with a seat, a pleasant resting place. Hence may be seen perhaps the finest piece of coast in the island. Piles and slabs of granite beetle over heathery slopes, over a turquoise



sea laced with a line of foam. Far away as it seems—though only for the reason that you can see nothing beyond—a bold promontory closes the view. Right ahead, almost in the foreground, the granite is cloven as if with the knife of a Titan, and a mighty slab fifty feet high and fifteen thick leans outward, clean cut as a slab from the quarries of Carrara. This great chine of rock is the most striking feature of the “Earthquake.”

The Earthquake is the name given to a series of deep fissures or crevasses in the granite, running parallel with the coast for some little distance. The depth of these fissures varies from twenty-five feet to a hundred, or even more. Although this is the principal scene of the convulsion, there is no doubt that it extended a considerable distance to the southward—there is the piece we passed just now by the Friar’s Garden, and probably the Devil’s Limekiln was caused by the same agency. It is quite possible to descend into the depths, especially into the great chasm beneath the slab, and it is well worth the exertion. About and between the fissures the ground is thickly carpeted with heather and fern, so that there is none of that rugged nakedness with which these rendings of the rocks are too often accompanied.

As to what was the cause of the disturbance, opinions, of course, differ. Earthquake, however, is as good a name as any, and earthquake it probably was that caused it. That the result was not due to a landslip is evident, because the rocks are fractured contrary to their line of strike. Geologists refer the disturbance to times pre-historic, and scout the popular idea that it was caused by the earthquake that destroyed Lisbon in 1755, though they are willing enough to admit that the latter may have increased the displacement.\*

\* *Vide* Mr. T. H. Hall’s “Notes on the Geology of Lundy.” (Trans. Dev. Assoc., vol. iv.)

Not far beyond the Earthquake we reach a rocky glen falling abruptly towards the sea and watered by the largest stream on the island. It is known as the Punchbowl Valley, and takes its name from a large piece of granite hollowed out into a basin, which lies on the very brink of the stream about thirty paces below the junction of a little tributary. Unfortunately it is broken to pieces, its destruction being attributed to some excursionists who attempted to roll it down the slope. This "Punchbowl," which measures 4ft. in diameter, has been the object of a very unnecessary amount of learned speculation. One writer thinks it Druidical; another Christian—the baptismal font of some unknown chapel. No one seems to have remembered that the large reedy pond called Ponds bury at the head of the valley from which the stream issues has a *dam* built across its lower end, and that on the bank there once existed a *mill*. In short, the "Punchbowl" is nothing more nor less than a millstone for grinding corn, and has no more connection with religious rites than the lighthouse.

The view down the glen—of bright stream falling in little cascades over boulders and ledges of rock, of stony slopes bright with cushions of heather, and of blue sea, framed in by the folding of the cliffs, is beautiful. Just beyond the corner the stream has no bed at all, plunging, or, rather, sliding, over a precipice to the rocky foreshore below, almost wetting with its spray the Devil's Chimney, a tall bleached granite pillar two hundred feet high.

Close to the Half Way Wall the rock scenery is again very fine. Here are the tall pinnacles of the Cheeses, so named from the round, cheese-shaped layers of rock which, piled one upon another, rise high above the slopes. Resting for a moment in the sunny corner beneath the wall, we look back. What a glorious sweep it is! In the foreground, rising from a declivity almost unscalable, lofty pillars of granite seamed and weathered stand forth against the blue.

Between them you look down a gorge to the sea spouting over the reefs four hundred feet below. To the south, full in view, the Devil's Chimney stands like a sentinel over against a great cleft in the precipice, while off the next headland the ever-restless surf breaks against the Needle Rock. Inland, almost over the tops of the Cheeses, the white column of the lighthouse looks down over an undulating steppe of purple and gold.

The bay below is known as Jenny's Cove. Jenny was not a woman, but a ship—an African trader that, nearly a hundred years ago, went ashore right under the cliffs, and, like most other vessels that try conclusions with Lundy, became a total wreck. She was loaded with ivory and gold dust, and it is said that a large quantity of both still remains in the cove. As a fact some of the ivory *was* recovered by a party of salvors not so very long ago. But there cannot be much gold dust left, for the leathern bags, in which it was in those days the custom to ship it, must have decayed years since.

Not far from the Half Way Wall we shall come upon heaps and lines of stones lying along the brink of the slopes. No one seems able to account for their presence, but, from their position, it is not improbable that they are the ruins of breastworks. The coast, too, at this point, is certainly much more open to attack, there being one or two places where—though certainly under very exceptional circumstances—it might be possible to scale the cliffs. These shapeless heaps of rubble are a good mark by which to find the Gladstone Rock, a small clump on the southern side of a runnel—the second runnel beyond the wall. When seen in profile this rock bears a strong resemblance to our retired Premier, and, sad to say, from another point of view the likeness to that old reprobate "Ally Sloper" is equally striking. In fact, having caught sight of the bulbous nose of "Ally" first, I was inclined to

name the rock in his honour ; but, presently, as I passed round it, the clear-cut features of the statesman stood out against the grassy slope, and it occurred to me that, after all, the name of Gladstone was the more respectable.

About a quarter of a mile inland a low round boss of granite rises against the sky line. This was the site of one of the round towers, and half a century ago there were still remains enough to enable Mr. Chanter to give measurements. He states that the inner diameter was 15ft. Now not one stone has been left upon another, and their disappearance requires little explanation. For within a few yards is the Three Quarter Wall.

The antiquity of these round towers is well known ; their origin has never been satisfactorily explained—probably never will be. Those on Lundy appear to have been very similar to the Irish round towers—their doorways considerably above the level of the ground—and their existence on the island has been accounted for by the connection of the Mariscos with Ireland.\* They seem to have been used rather as places of refuge than of offence, and were probably the last resort of the islanders from pirates and other foes. There were at least three on the island. The second stood near Tibbett's Hill, the high ground a few hundred yards to the eastward ; the third, which was the last to fall, was near the landing place, and, from its position, was perhaps more of a fort than either of the others.

Passing through the Three Quarter Wall, the last and the most modern of the stone fences traversing the island, we reach the heathery waste which extends to the North End. The coast becomes even wilder than before, the cliffs grander and more precipitous, one headland in particular beetling over in such a manner that the face of the cliff, except about the base, cannot be seen at all. It is underneath

\* Chanter.

this overhanging brow that the inclined plane called the Devil's Slide slopes to the sea. It looks like a toboggan slide in stone, and must be quite four hundred feet in length, but its proportions can only be properly viewed from a boat. At the foot, confined within walls of rock, is a cove of deep green water, where the Ancient Enemy could cool himself at his leisure.

From this point the island narrows rapidly, the surface at the same time sinking into a shallow depression, across which, for the first time, the sea is visible on either hand. Bogs and marshy places abound, and the "road" is, at times, scarcely distinguishable, passing now through wet grass and heather, anon over a floor of bare rock or detritus of granite gravel. But along the cliff tops the walking is still dry, and in a few minutes the ground rises again in a gradual but steady slope to the North End. On the highest point—it has long been visible against the sky—is John o' Groat's House, a little building measuring but 20ft. by 10ft., and so ruinous that the walls are but 4ft. high. Small as it is, however, it was divided into two chambers, that on the east, where was the entrance, being the smaller. In the troublous days of the Civil War it was a watch house, and did not become "John o' Groat's" till the beginning of the present century. The name was given to it by a Scotchman who came to Lundy for the shooting, and there is a tradition that he even lived in it. He must have been a hermit indeed, for nothing can be further from the "madding crowd"—if there *can* be a madding crowd on Lundy—than this exposed ruin.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### LUNDY : THE EASTERN COAST.

The North End—The Constable—The Virgin's Well—The Gannet Stone—Plans for Harbour of Refuge—Brazen Ward—A French Ruse—The Gull Rock—Tibbett's Hill—The Templar Rock—The Logan—The Granite Quarries—Wrecks of the *Tunisie* and *Hannah More*.

ALMOST immediately behind John o' Groat's the ground declines rapidly and sinks to the sea in a great slope covered with rock-masses and boulders. The finest of these is a huge rectangular stack of granite known as the Constable. He is Lundy's solitary policeman. "It is therefore," says a writer in the *North Devon Magazine*, "it is therefore no use going to Lundy in the hope of out-running the Constable."

The view from this lofty brow is magnificent. Look at it this bright August evening, when the sun shines full upon the Devon shore, bringing out in strong relief against the dark hills behind the white lighthouse of Hartland! From the Foreland, near the borders of Somerset, to Carnbeak, near Boscastle in Cornwall, the glance ranges. There, once more, is High Veer, and there is the Hangman, looking more mountainous than ever, rising from the pale sea vapour that wraps his feet, and beyond grey Exmoor sweeping southward and eastward in long undulation. And there is the sharp cone that looks down upon Combe Martin Bay, and Hillsborough, and the Torrs, and Bull Point, and rugged Morte, and the line of houses that climb the hillside from Woolacombe. Below, if your eyes are

good, you can make out Woolacombe itself, and Baggy Point, and Croyde and the Downs of Saunton. And what is that white speck at the very head of Bideford Bay? That is Braunton Lighthouse, and behind it are the villas of Instow, and nearer, on the hill to the right, the houses of Northam and Westward Ho. Clovelly lies in its cleeve, but a fragment of Buck's Mills is visible, and Clovelly Court is as self-assertive as ever.

Of the Welsh coast less can be seen. For the Worm's Head—that singular line of broken rock, for all the world like a great snake rising from the sea—is thirty miles away, and the depression of Carmarthen Bay places another twelve miles between Lundy and the land of the Cymri. Still, after a shower, I think you will see Precelly mountain, although more than fifty miles distant; the high land about Tenby, and most of the Gower peninsula, nearly, if not quite, to the oddly-named Mumbles. But eastward of this everything is dim.

The surface of the sea, streaked with many a current and tide race, is dotted with shipping. A great four-master moves majestically up Channel in tow of an ugly-looking tug; a schooner is making a long tack across the bay towards the estuary of Taw and Torridge; the smoke of a collier outward bound blurs for a moment the Hartland cliffs; and a whole bevy of small coasters that have been sheltering from the easterly gale that blew all yesterday under the Cornish lee come merrily past the reefs. The anchorage is empty, but if the breeze "stiffens" it will soon be half full of craft of all shapes and sizes waiting till the weather moderates.

How different the scene in a former day! Instead of looking upon Lundy as a refuge from the storm, we may imagine the poor Bristol traders hugging close the Welsh or English shore, preferring the risk of being cast upon the cruel slate reefs of Hartland or the sand flats of

Carmarthen Bay to falling into the clutches of the corsairs of Lundy. And, even had no corsairs been there, the Severn Sea of the Middle Ages, even of two centuries ago, must have been a watery waste compared with the Bristol Channel of to-day. Cardiff, the busiest port in the West, was then unknown; Swansea was in its infancy; the day of Newport and Neath was yet to dawn. Only "Bristowe" was of importance, and Bristowe had not a tithe of the shipping that it has to-day. There were no four-masters then spreading their ten thousand yards of canvas, no steamers—nothing but clumsy little barks with enormous poops and bows like the bastion of a citadel—barks that were thought leviathans if they carried four hundred tons. What would they say now, those mariners of dead centuries, could they look from this heathery down on vessels of four *thousand*, and of these perhaps a dozen passing daily? Verily the old order changeth and giveth place to the new.

Let us climb down to that bare rocky spine, the north-western extremity of the island. This ridge, even more than the slope watched over by the Constable, is the chosen resort of sea birds. They have even worn away the turf. In its place the ground is covered with, and, indeed, composed of, large quantities of a dull brown deposit made up of the peaty soil and guano. There are acres and acres of this substance along these northern and north-western slopes, and one wonders that so valuable a product is not collected and utilised. It is stated, however, that its value is questionable, owing to the dissolution of the ammonia and chemical salts by the heavy rains.

This north-western point is pierced by a fine cave or tunnel. It is inaccessible from the land, but a boat can pass through with ease; and as there are no less than five openings, as well as two large holes in the roof letting in light



and air, there is none of the gloom usually inseparable from such places. The shape is very irregular, varying in width from perhaps thirty feet in the centre to a yard at the narrowest entrance. The length is, at the outside, two hundred feet, probably not so much; certainly not more than a quarter of the length given by Mr. Chanter—eight hundred feet! It is about thirty feet high. Of the approximate accuracy of these dimensions I am certain, as I rowed right through the cave and examined it at leisure.

And what a delightful retreat it is on a hot day, when the noontide sun is striking on the glassy water, and the granite slopes overhead dance and shimmer in the glare! Here, added to the coolness of the grotto, you have the liquid notes of the clear water, as it laps against the dark shining walls, while, to right and left, the rude arches of the openings frame in a picture of blue water and bluer sky crossed now and again by some solitary sea bird.

But the strangest thing about this cavern is that in the middle a spring of *fresh* water bubbles up through the brine. This Virgin's Well, as it is called, I was unable to trace, but Mr. Heaven told me that he had himself seen and tasted it, so that there is no doubt of its existence. He added, however, that of late years some masses of rock had fallen from the roof, which had perhaps affected the spring, so that, instead of bubbling up in one particular spot, it might now be dispersed.

Leaving the North End, with its dangerous submerged reef, called by the very mild name of the Hen and Chickens, we will now turn southwards. But we do not get far without an obstacle. In about a quarter of a mile a deep combe—for Lundy—breaks the line of cliff. It is horribly boggy—in fact, impassable at any time dryshod—but it is very picturesque. The slopes, mantled with a great carpet of heather and fields of fern, glow with colour, save

where here and there the grey granite breaks through the surface. Through coarse grass and rushes two or three little brooks struggle down to the cove at the combe foot—a cove where the water takes a darker tint than usual from the mighty shadow of the Gannet Stone.

The Gannet Stone is a great granite peak, separated by a narrow channel from two somewhat similar masses which form a striking headland. Compared with the colouring on the western coast, all three peaks are singularly light, which is perhaps accounted for by the fact that they face east, and have been bleached by the morning sun of countless ages.

The rock is quite unscalable, even by the egg seekers—who can get at most places. But then they are let down with ropes from the cliff top. It appears to have been known as the Gannet Stone from time immemorial, and figures even in the Inquisition made when King Edward the Second gave the island to Despenser as “a certain rock called the Gannett stone with two places near it where gannets settle and breed, worth in ordinary years sixty-six shillings and eight pence”—a good price in those days—“but,” adds the Inquisition, “this year destroyed in part by the Scots.”

What the Scots were doing so far south does not appear.

The cove beneath this rock is one of the sites suggested for the long talked of harbour of refuge. The other site is at the Gull Rock, a little further south, where it was proposed to erect a pier or breakwater stretching in a south-easterly direction to meet another pier to be built from Rat Island, the two piers inclosing an area of 714 acres. The principal objection to both plans is the depth of the water and consequent expense, the estimate for the latter scheme amounting to no less than three millions.

Failing Lundy, Clovelly and the Mumbles have been

suggested. The arguments for and against these places need not be discussed here ; it is enough to state the *pros* and *cons* with regard to Lundy. The supporters of the scheme urge the situation, which is about the centre of the most dangerous part of the Channel, and the cheapness of land and material ; while the opposition point to the fogs, the tide races, the want of beach and of resources for repairs.

Meanwhile, nothing is done either here or at the other places mentioned ; and I suppose it will need some great disaster, involving the loss of a few hundred lives, to revive interest in the matter. Had it not been for the ever-memorable blizzard, we should to this very day be without electric communication between the coast lighthouses (as we still are with those at sea), and till half a dozen ships have foundered at once in the Bristol Channel for want of a harbour of refuge, or another *Dunottar Castle* has gone on the Eddystone, perhaps with disastrous results, I suppose both questions will remain in abeyance.

Unless the objections to all the schemes are insuperable, it does seem a little strange that even so large a sum as £3,000,000 is not forthcoming. One would have thought that if the Government—which, by the way, admitted the fitness of Lundy for such a harbour—was frightened at the expense, our great shipowners would not have been, and would long ago have subscribed the whole or a substantial part of the sum necessary.

A million vessels, it has been computed, pass Lundy every year, from twenty to a hundred are not unfrequently seen lying under its lee, and “on one occasion three hundred vessels were in sight, and a hundred and seventy of good size anchored at once in the roadstead.” \* It looks very much as if English merchants, having insured vessel and cargo, cared little for the crew. “When I was

\* Chanter.

clerk in a Bristol shipping office," said a gentleman to me, "I heard my principal exclaim, on opening his letters, 'Good Heavens! the —— has foundered with all hands.' I murmured some words of sympathy. He stared. 'Oh!' he replied, cheerfully, 'it's all right—she's well insured.' 'But how about the crew?' I ventured to ask. 'Ah!' he said, meditatively, 'I never thought of that!'"

A little to the south of the Gannet Stone commence the steep, smooth slopes called the Sidelands. But even here the granite occasionally asserts itself, breaking forth in tors and pinnacles which sometimes present forms strange and interesting. As we walk along the brow we presently look down upon one of these tors, and, if we descend a hundred feet or so, shall notice that about the middle the rock is pierced by a small opening. This is the Mousehole, and just beneath it is the Mousetrap—a slab tilted up and resting upon another block exactly after the fashion of the traps that some of us used to make in the days of our youth.

At the base of the next point we shall notice something which has the appearance of ruinous walls. It is a long climb down through the fern and gorse with which these great slopes are covered, but it is practicable, and we soon find ourselves among the remains of the Brazen Ward, one of the little forts erected at the time of the Civil War. It was mounted with brass guns, and hence its name. These guns were thrown into the sea by a French privateer, whose crew captured the island in the reign of William and Mary.

The story of how the Frenchmen took the island, though bearing a remarkable likeness to the tale of the capture of Sark by the English, has been so often told—and believed in—that it would never do to omit it in an account of Lundy. So it shall be told once more, and, to quote the

words of old Westcote about another "yarn," "it is at your choice to believe this story or no."

Well, one day, a ship flying Dutch colours anchored in the roadstead, and a boat's crew came ashore to beg a little milk for their captain, who, as they said, was very ill. The milk was supplied, but by-and-by the islanders were informed that the captain was dead—and would they allow his body to be interred in consecrated ground. Permission was readily granted, and the crew of the Dutchman requited the civility by sending an invitation to the whole population to be present at the funeral. On the day appointed the church was filled by the simple islanders. When the corpse was brought in they were courteously asked to retire for a few moments, while some religious ceremonial was held over the coffin. They went into the graveyard and the doors were closed. They had not long to wait. Suddenly the doors flew open, out rushed an armed band, and took them all prisoners. The coffin contained no corpse, but muskets and cutlasses, and the Dutchmen hailed from the southern shores of the English Channel, and not from the levels of Holland.

They behaved like brutes. Reserving such cattle as they needed for their own use, they hamstrung the remainder or threw them into the sea, together with the cannon of Marisco Castle and the Brazen Ward, and having stripped the kind-hearted islanders of everything, including even their clothing, took their departure.

Of the Brazen Ward little is left. There are the ruins of a building of about the same size and shape as John o' Groat's, while southward along the edge of the cliff, which is here very low, runs a breastwork of masonry 45ft. long, 4ft. high, and 3ft. thick, and another fragment extends for a few yards to the north. The brass cannon lay in the water for nearly a century and a half, when the farmer fished them up and sold them to a yachtsman, who

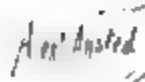
mounted them on his yacht. A gun thrown over the cliff below Marisco Castle still lies where it fell, though it is generally buried deep in the shingle, and is only uncovered by an unusually raking sea.

In the little cove to the north of the Ward a semi-circular opening will be observed some twenty feet, perhaps, above high-water mark. I am informed that the floor of this cave when stamped upon gives forth a hollow sound, and the island story is that treasure is concealed there. No attempt, however, has been made to prove the truth of the tradition. Probably the "treasure" would turn out as mythical as usual.

Southward rises the bluff of Tibbett's Hill, which is but a few feet lower than Beacon Hill, where the lighthouse stands, and which, as we have already seen, is the highest land on the island. Tibbett's Hill ends in Tibbett's Point, off which lie the pair of rocks called the Knoll Pins, while a little south is the Gull Rock. From the summit of the hill there is a good view over the greater part of the island. At the back a mound with a few scattered stones marks the site of one of the round towers. To the south the cliff slopes are broken by some fine rock masses. The most interesting, if not the finest, lies about two hundred yards north of the Half Way Wall, which we are again approaching. This is the Templar Rock. The Templar is seen in profile. The colossal face is so perfect in its outlines that seen at a distance—when the joints in the granite are imperceptible—it is difficult to believe that Time and the weather are the only sculptors. On the head is a peaked cap. The Templar stares steadily out to sea as if watching for the rovers that he knows have designs upon his island.

At the very end of the wall is another pile which once supported a logan stone. This is a square block, and was balanced on part of the pile, from which the action of the

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### THE "TEMPLAR," LUNDY ISLAND.

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elements had gradually split it away. Not many years ago it "logged" well enough, but it has now lost its equilibrium and leans forward at an angle from which no human hand will ever stir it again.

Beyond the Logan we strike the grass-grown road running along the Sidelands to the abandoned granite quarries. The marks made by the sleepers of the tramroad are still visible, though the quarries have been closed for many years. It is a wild place. Everywhere the hillside is scarred with the excavations: here and there piles of rock lie just as they were when the working ceased. The slopes below the road are disfigured with great heaps of refuse, stretching in some places right down to the sea, and it will be many years, perhaps centuries, before vegetation can make any appreciable impression upon these sterile heaps. At the southern end of the quarries you will see a combe or dingle with a few small trees. A little to the north of this a tramway took the granite at a steep angle down to a wooden jetty or pier. This has long since been washed away—indeed, even the solid wall at its base is little more than a ruin.

The granite works were started in 1863, the company also taking over the management of the farm. For awhile the undertaking was a success, some of the stone being of excellent quality. But, owing to difficulties in shipping and for other reasons, the company came to grief, and the works were abandoned. On the whole, their failure was not a bad thing for Lundy. For the company, if unsuccessful as stone merchants, were worse as farmers, and let the land deteriorate greatly. Possibly, too, the three hundred quarrymen and labourers—it is said that there were a hundred English, a hundred Scotch, and a hundred Irish—confined in a small island found their leisure time hang heavy on their hands. At any rate, they got into all sorts of mischief—poaching, trespassing, trampling

down the crops, and otherwise making themselves a thorough nuisance. Nobody, I think, wishes the quarrymen back, and their empty cottages on the hill top above the works are fast lapsing into ruin.

Another quaint visage overlooks the quarries. About midway there is a rock strangely like a rugged human face, and the resemblance is increased by a tiny hole just where the eye would come, through which, when seen against the sky, the light shines brightly.

Beyond the quarries the Quarter Wall is reached. Beyond this, again, and a long way below, rises the conical piece of cliff called the Sugarloaf, the last of the granite. South of this the slate begins, continuing to the very extremity of the island.

Just this side of the Sugarloaf is the watering place for vessels lying in the anchorage. Down a perpendicular wall of granite comes a little cascade of purest water, falling into the sea at a point where the water is so deep that a boat can come alongside easily. It was near this place that the large French steamer *Tunisie* drove ashore in a blinding easterly gale two or three springs ago. Our friend Thomas, the fisherman, was the first to discover the wreck, and, clambering down the rough slopes to the edge of the cliffs, managed to rig up an impromptu rocket stand, and sent a line over the shivering sailors. He was joined by others, and all day they worked till the whole crew had been landed and hauled up the cliff. So great was the fury of the wind that the rescuers were often unable to keep their feet, but had to throw themselves upon their faces, while at times the intense cold rendered their fingers so numb that they could not feel the ropes. For this achievement Thomas received the gold medal of the Board of Trade, and each of the others had a money reward; but, strange to say, the owners of the steamer showed no recognition whatever!

The end of our ramble approaches. We have reached private property—the grounds of the Villa. Their owner, however, permits us to follow the pathway along the brow, which will bring us out upon the hill above the landing place. The view of Marisco Castle, of Lametry Peninsula, and of Rat Island from these grounds—as rough and uncultivated, by the way, as any part of the Sidelands—is fine; in fact, from no part of the island can the whole bay be better seen. As we look down upon it all we are reminded of another of the Lundy wrecks—that of the *Hannah More*. The *Hannah More* was a full-rigged ship laden with guano, which dragged her anchors and went ashore to the south of Rat island. The sea ran so high that, except to leeward of the island, no boat could be launched, and of course on the western side (which on this occasion was the lee side) no boat is, or can be, kept. But the men of Lundy were not to be done. Mr. Heaven's boat was actually hauled up over the *col* connecting Lametry with the cliff beneath the castle—a ridge that few people would cross with hands empty—and launched into the calmer waters beyond! And little by little she saved no less than thirty men, some of whom, poor fellows, had been on a portion of the wreck for three days. Meanwhile, the captain, in a state of desperation, had committed suicide. The crew told how he drank a bottle of brandy, and, never even looking shorewards, leapt into the raging breakers. His body was washed ashore at Hartland.

We leave Lundy with regret. Apart from the fine cliff scenery, the pure bracing air, the wonderful colour and transparency of the sea that rolls in unchecked from iron-bound Labrador, there is a freedom from all conventionality—a freedom unknown upon the mainland even among the wildest fishing villages of Cornwall. Lundy is distinctly out of the beaten track; you can go where you

like, you can do what you like, you can wear what you like, without being subjected to the criticism or annoying the susceptibilities of anyone. I believe you might walk to John o' Groat's in a dressing-gown (a very uncomfortable garment, by the way, for such a walk), and I am sure you might in a poncho, without exciting more than passing remark, perhaps without exciting remark at all, as it is ten to one whether you would meet one of your fellow mortals.

## PART III.

# THE SOUTH COAST OF DEVON.

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### CHAPTER XVII.

#### PLYMOUTH.

A Walk down the Tamar—The Hamoaze—Plymouth Sound—The Hoe—  
Story of the Eddystone—The Breakwater—Drake's Island—The  
Citadel—History of Plymouth—The Black Prince—The French  
Descents—A Big Pie—Catharine of Arragon.

Silvery bays  
Are seen where commerce lifts the peaceful sail,  
Or where the war-barques ride ; the indented coast  
Frowns with wave-breasting rocks . . . .  
. . . . and cliffs high crown'd  
With pealing batteries, and flags that wave  
In the fresh ocean gale.

N. T. CARRINGTON.

It is a long way from Marsland Mouth to Plymouth Sound. A long way in a direct line, of course much longer if you go by coach and railway. For there is no railway station nearer than Holsworthy, and, though a coach communicates therewith, it is necessary to walk on to Bude to catch it. In winter, indeed, this is the *only* communication, for the summer coach route from Bude to Bideford is only open from the beginning of May to the end of October. And this—though a walk of four or five miles will bring you on to the road near Wooley—is a very roundabout way of reaching Plymouth Sound.

If you have the time—and the inclination—you will do

well to eschew both routes and make for Plymouth on your own legs. Within an hour's tramp is the source of the Tamar, one of the most beautiful rivers in the West. What then can be more pleasant, after so long a ramble over the stern and rugged cliffs, than to betake oneself to scenes more placid, and trace the windings of this river down to Weir Head, where it first meets the salt water? And hence, if it be summer, the journey to Plymouth may be continued on one of those little steamers which McBride the enterprising runs so frequently for the convenience of the "guileless tourist."

But this Tamar I have written of elsewhere\*—we have been up it if not down it. So its scenery must be passed over in outline.

From its source on Wooley Moor, in the little boggy pool from which also flows the Torridge, it runs down a semi-moorland valley to Alfardisworthy (which we Devon folk call *Alsery*), where it spreads into a lake, once the reservoir for the disused Bude Canal. Thence it flows onwards past Bridgerule and beneath Tamerton tower to the green vale which trends southward to the ancient town of Launceston, which is quite near enough to its banks for a visit, and where may be seen a crumbling castle as old as the days of the Conquest, and a church notable for the carved stones of the *exterior* walls. But four miles below Launceston the scenery changes. Hills close in upon the river, and you wander past the grey rocks of Carthamartha and through the wooded defiles of Endsleigh, so hidden from the outer world that you might be in a Highland glen or a Dartmoor valley. At Horsebridge the country opens, and there is a glimpse of the great heathery backs of Kit Hill and Hingston Down, their slopes studded with mine stacks—the advance guard, as it were, of the busy mining district of Gunnislake. Presently you strike the leat, an

\* See "The Rivers of Devon," chapters xii. and xiii.

artificial stream like a small canal, which taps the Tamar to drive the big wheels of the Devon Great Consols Mines. This leat winds above the river for two miles or more, passing along a wooded hillside to its termination at the workings. From the Devon Great Consols, once in output and perhaps still in *extent*, the largest copper mine in Europe, a road leads to New Bridge beneath the ugly village of Gunnislake. Here, for the first time, the Tamar becomes a staid river. But, though navigable for barges, the steamer does not come beyond the lock two or three miles below where is the *weir* which gives this part of the Tamar its name.

It is below Weir Head that the most beautiful scenes on the Tamar unfold themselves. The steamer passes the pinnacles of the Morwell Rocks, rising from a wooded precipice to a height of three hundred feet above the stream—the church of Calstock, high on the timbered steep of the Cornish shore—the almost perpendicular shores of Cothele, that ancient fortified mansion of days mediæval—and the lawns of Pentillie Castle. Mile after mile the river twists and turns between lofty hills, covered to their tops with foliage, save where here and there the hot breath of burning arsenic has blasted both leaf and twig for evermore. Then, with a final coil, almost doubling back upon itself, it leaves the wood behind, and lo! a wide estuary, bordered by gentle slopes, bridged at its narrowest part by the *chef d'œuvre* of Isambard Brunel, binding Devon to Cornwall. Under the great iron viaduct the steamer cleaves her way, to call for a moment at Saltash climbing from the waterside towards the railway overhead, and then steams onward among the ancient wooden walls and modern iron monsters of our navy to the busy docks of Keyham and Devonport.

Mount Edgcumbe is now ahead on the starboard bow—Mount Edgcumbe with its green lawns and splendid timber—that mount that, as Garrick sung,

All the mounts of England surpasses.

and which, it is said, the commander of the Armada had determined to select for his portion of the new territory of Philip of Spain, counting—as many others have done—his chickens before they were hatched. In a few minutes we have rounded Devil's Point, passed the Great Western Docks at Millbay, and—*there*, full in sight, heaving and glittering in the evening sunlight, are the waters of Plymouth Sound.

Surely it is worth the thirty-five mile tramp from Wooley Moor to Weir Head to come thus upon a scene which has no rival in England.

From the Hoe, the hill that lies between Plymouth and the sea, we command the whole panorama. Rather different, is it not, from the quiet cove on the boundary line between Devon and Cornwall? Here are no rough cliffs, no combe with its oaks and trout stream. On the landward side buildings climb the hill to its very crown, and the turf knows nothing of gorse and bracken, but is worn by the steps of the multitude where it is not threaded by broad paths. For the Hoe is the promenade of Plymouth.

And a noble promenade it is. On the one hand, the domain of Mount Edgcumbe, as verdant, as soft as a bit of the Italian shore; on the other, the breezy downs of Staddon descending to the waters in bold slopes. In front, the long, low line of the Breakwater with its lighthouse and beacon; below, the fortified rock of Drake's Island, and an ever-changing kaleidoscope of moving ship and boat and steamer. An ocean liner lies just within the Breakwater, while further out towards Rame Head one of our floating forts is driving the sea over her bows in cataracts as she steams heavily away westward.

The Hoe is of very ancient fame indeed. Here, says the legend, Corineus—otherwise the giant Cormoran, who met his fate at the hands of Jack the Giant Killer, the hero of



our nursery days—slew a brother giant, Gogmagog, or, as Spenser calls him in his “Faerie Queene,” Goemot.

The Western Hough besprinkled with the gore  
Of mighty Goemot, who in stout fray  
Corineus conquered and cruelly did slay.

The jaw-bones and teeth of Gogmagog were (believe it if you can) discovered when the foundations of the Citadel were being dug more than two hundred years ago. In Spenser's time the figures of the combatants were cut upon the turf,\* but these have long been overgrown, and nothing is left—not even the bones—to commemorate the duel. There are some who say that the Hoe is the *Ictis* of Diodorus Siculus. On this endless discussion we will not enter. For others would have it that Drake's Island was the place, while many more urge the claims of the Isle of Wight and St. Michael's Mount.

The ridge is crowned by monuments. There stands the burly figure of Sir Francis Drake, his hand resting on the globe which he was the first to circumnavigate. Near him a bronze figure of Britannia with drawn sword and banner surmounts the granite monument raised to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the defeat of the Armada. But on the slope rises a column more interesting than either the statue of Elizabeth's great viking or the memorial of Britain's Salamis—a column that testifies dumbly to the God-given skill of an engineer, to the triumph of man over Nature—the tower of Smeaton's Eddystone lighthouse. What place more fitting than the Hoe to bear the old Pharos? What place more fitting to tell its story?

The story of the Eddystone is full of romance. The reef had borne three lighthouses before the present structure was erected between 1879 and 1882. Two had a tragic

\* In a Town account for 1567 there is a payment of 8*d.* “for new cutting of the Gogmagoge on the Howe.”

ending, and an accident occurred in connection with the third which very nearly had a tragic ending, too. Most people know the story of the first—the wooden building erected by Winstanley. How he boasted that he would willingly be in it throughout the strongest gale that ever blew, and how, shortly after, he, with his three assistants, perished in its fall. The storm was of extraordinary violence. In London alone more than eight hundred houses were destroyed, and in the country “upwards of four hundred windmills were either blown down or took fire by the violence with which the sails were driven round by the wind.” Four thousand trees were levelled in the New Forest, and nearly five times that number in Kent. The navy lost fifteen ships and the merchant service over three hundred. The Bishop of Bath and Wells and his sister were killed by the falling of their palace.\*

This was in 1703, and the second lighthouse, also in great part of wood, built by Rudyerd, arose in 1709. This stood forty-five years, and then fire claimed it for its own. The three keepers were rescued, but one lost his reason, and the second, an old man of 94, died within a fortnight, complaining that he had swallowed some of the molten lead from the roof. And he was right; for a post-mortem examination revealed nearly seven ounces of metal in his stomach!

The next lighthouse was the one now standing on the Hoe. Smeaton rejected both the pagoda-like plan of Winstanley's building and the introduction of timber into the structure erected by Rudyerd. He adopted as his model the trunk of an oak, and imbedded the base of his tower in the rock itself, building a solid foundation thirteen feet in height. Tapering gently, the lighthouse rose to a height of over eighty-five feet, a massive column of dove-tailed stone. It was a difficult task, for the Eddystone reef

\* Bellamy's "Thousand Facts in the Histories of Devon and Cornwall."

is twelve miles from Plymouth and exposed to the full fury of the elements. At that time we were at war with France, and one day a privateer had the bad taste to carry the workmen off to a French prison. When Louis the Fifteenth heard of it he was very angry. "I am at war with England," he said, "but not at war with all mankind." And, placing their captors in their cells, he set the Englishmen free with a handsome recompense.

Smeaton's tower braved the storms of no less than one hundred and twenty-three winters, and would perhaps have braved as many more but for a natural phenomenon. The rock was less enduring than the lighthouse. It became undermined; another site was selected, and the present building arose, towering high over the column of Smeaton. The lantern, which is 133ft. above high water, was first lit in the spring of 1882.

Practically it is a copy of its predecessor, the principal difference being in the base, which is square, in order to break the impact of the waves, which would sometimes run up the whole height of the old building and even "curl over the top." The cost was £80,000, and the time occupied in its erection three years and eight months, or eighteen months longer than Smeaton's building. But then it must be remembered there was no particular hurry, as the old lighthouse was not removed till the new one was finished.

In removing the stones of the old lighthouse to its present position on the Hoe occurred the accident to which I referred just now. A son of the engineer was watching the swinging of a block, when the machinery gave way, and he was hurled headlong. The hearts of the onlookers were in their mouths, for it was low tide. But as he was falling a large wave momentarily covered the rock, and he fell into three feet of water. This saved his life, and I believe even his limbs. Mr. Douglass appears to have taken the tide literally "at the flood!"

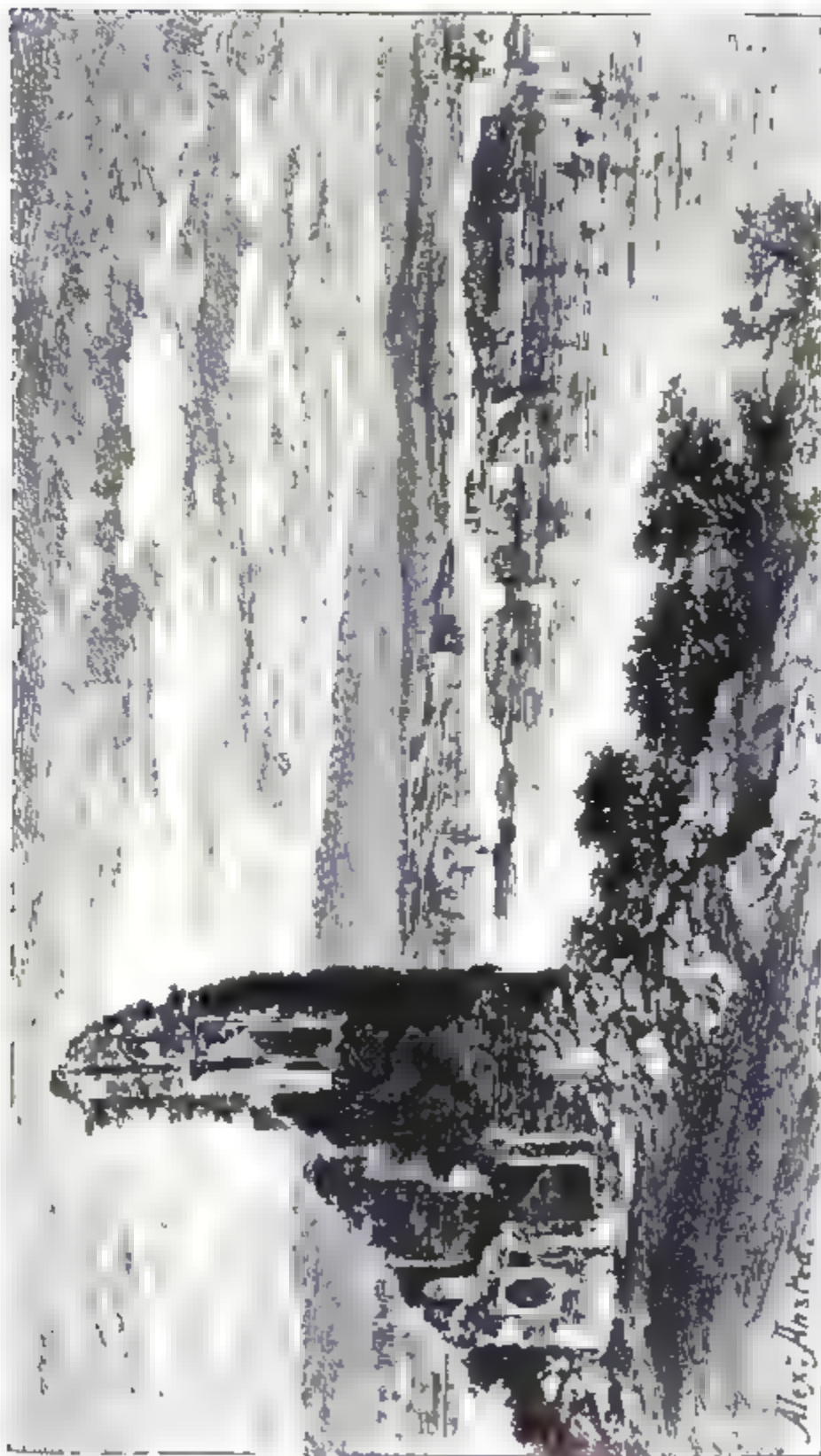
Like that of the now historical policeman, it seems that "a *keeper's* life is not a happy one." When work is finished there is nothing to do but read—the Trinity House supplies a library—eat, drink, and sleep, unless the weather be fine enough to admit of fishing. If the following story told by Lord North in the House of Commons be true—which there is, so far as I know, no reason to doubt—the dulness must be appalling. On one occasion when some visitors landed on the rock, one of the company observed to the light keeper how comfortably they must live there, secured in competency, at a distance from the turmoil of the world. "Yes," replied the man, "very comfortably, if we could but have the use of our tongues; but it is now a full month since my partner and I have spoken to each other."\*

And yet the life has its attractions. One man was so contented that for two summers he refused his holiday. Pressed by his friends, however, the third year he came ashore. But the change was too much for him. He was continually at the public-house, sank into a state of drunkenness, and before his time had expired was dead from the effects of a heavy bout. Another keeper must have been a wit. He had, says Mr. Smeaton, been employed at making leather pipes for engines, but, growing weary of the work, sent in his name as an applicant for the post of lighthouse keeper. As he was being rowed to the Eddystone, a boatman asked him why he had given up a profitable trade "to be shut up for months together in a pillar." "Why," said the man, "because I did not like *confinement!*" †

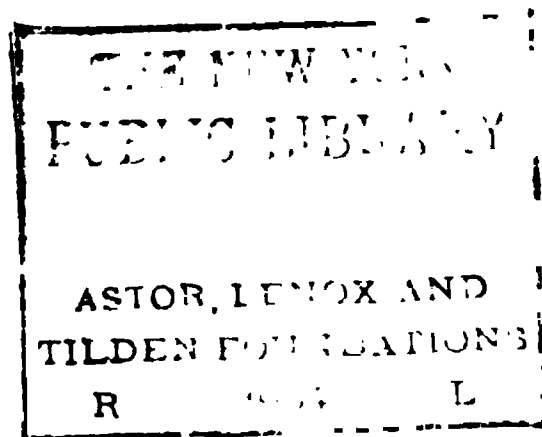
One more incident—it is a gruesome one—and we have done with the story of the Eddystone. At the time when only two keepers were employed, one sickened. A doctor was signalled for, but, owing to tempestuous weather, the

\* Walcott, p. 480.

† Gilpin's "Observations on the Western Counties."



DRAKE'S ISLAND, PLYMOUTH, FROM MOUNT EDGECOMBE.



rock could not be approached. The poor fellow died; and for three weeks the survivor dragged on existence in the storm-lashed column alone with a corpse. Fearing that he might lay himself open to a charge of foul play, he would not throw the body into the sea. I fancy that the recollection of those long winter nights, with the blast howling without and that dread presence within, must have abode with him to the end of his days.

Next in importance to the Eddystone is the Breakwater. It is a great work, this Breakwater, and one wonders how Plymouth managed so long to do without it. The history of its erection is instructive as showing how man may sometimes do well to take a hint from Nature. The work was commenced in 1812 and proceeded with till 1817, when a storm played havoc upon the great bank of granite blocks, and altered the inward slope from one in three to one in five. Man nevertheless persisted, until in 1824 another storm attacked his work, 200,000 tons of stone were washed away, and his one in three became one in five again. Thus Nature triumphed, and the Plymouth Breakwater of to-day has a slope of one in five,\* while the centre line has been moved 36ft. inwards, and the width at the top reduced from fifty feet to forty-eight.

This colossal work, of such incalculable value to shipping, was not completed till 1841. More than a million and a half were spent upon its construction, and four and a half million tons of stone tipped bodily into the sea or built upon the rude foundation when it reached the surface. The length of the central portion is 1000 yards; each of the arms measures 350 yards, so that it is only a few yards short of a mile. The engineers were Rennie and Wheatley.

Within the Breakwater the most prominent object is Drake's or St. Nicholas' Island. In early days a chapel to St. Michael (not St. Nicholas, why it bears his name I

\* The slope facing the sea is one in seven.

do not know) stood upon its summit, but this has long disappeared, and the island has been fortified for centuries. In 1643 it was turned into a State prison. Here at the Restoration were confined the Rev. George Hughes and the Rev. Abraham Cheere, two Plymouth ministers celebrated for their great worth and piety. The former was vicar of the parish church of St. Andrew, where he "adopted the Presbyterian form of worship," and was in consequence "deprived of his living and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment under the Conventicle Act. Of his religious works, "Aaron's Rod Blossoming, or the Benefit of Affliction," is perhaps the one best known, and excited the warm admiration of Baxter. Hughes did not die in gaol. He fell sick, and obtained permission to spend the remainder of his days at Kingsbridge, where he died.

Another prisoner, and one better known to history, was not so fortunate. The offence of John Lambert, Major-General under Cromwell, was not likely to be overlooked. After some years' exile in Guernsey, he was, owing to a plot for his escape and other reasons, brought back to England, and for fifteen years languished in this island prison, where he died in 1682.

At the eastern end of the Hoe, overlooking the Barbican Quay and Cattewater, or estuary of the river Plym, stands the Citadel. To the casual observer it looks strong enough, but I fancy that any one of those ugly black monsters lying below there could lay most of it in ruins in a few hours. But doubtless it was considered a very formidable affair indeed when it was built at the close of the Civil War, less as a terror to foreign foes than as a threat to domestic ones—*i.e.*, the sturdy Parliamentarians of Plymouth. It has a very handsome gateway, and the walk round the zigzag walls commands a panorama both of Plymouth and the Sound.

To-day Plymouth is one of the most important towns in



the country. It is also one of the most historical. And its history begins in very early times. Setting aside the debatable question whether it was the *Ictis* to which the Britons brought their tin from Cornwall for transhipment to Gaul, there are *certain* grounds for placing an important British settlement at or near Cattedown—that grassy hill that rises on the eastern side of the Sound—where, as we shall presently see, a large cemetery has been discovered on the site of the present fort of Stamford Hill. Some would like to make Plymouth the Roman *Tamara*, but, although this must have been in the neighbourhood, “probably at King’s Tamerton, where there are some remains of ancient earthworks,” yet the Roman road passed a good three miles inland, and no relics have yet been discovered sufficient to justify the theory that Plymouth was a Roman settlement. There is more reason, perhaps, for regarding it as the *Tamarweorth* of the Saxons, though there is a boldness about Mackenzie Walcott’s unhesitating statement, which is, I venture to think, hardly warranted when we consider how many are the elements of uncertainty.

However, there is no doubt that Plymouth existed before the Conquest, and the name of *Sutton* borne by the fishing village mentioned in Domesday Book still survives in Sutton Pool. This village was really composed of two or more hamlets, known as Sutton (*i.e.*, South Town) Prior, belonging to the great Priory of Plympton, and Sutton Regis. The latter, granted to the Norman family of Valletort, became sub-divided into Sutton Valletort and Sutton Ralph.

Plymouth owes much to Plympton Priory. It is the fashion nowadays to sneer at monasticism, and doubtless there was much abuse and no little evil. But there was also much good, and Sutton Prior, or “Sutton-juxta-Plym-mouthe,” would have been longer growing into the Plymouth of to-day had it not been for the monks of Plympton. “The

Augustinian Priory of Plympton," says a writer in Murray, "was the nursing mother of Plymouth." They fostered the fishing industry and any little coasting trade to the best of their ability, and the possession of Sutton by these monks "raised it at once to a point of importance in the scale of towns, since out of the dependence on the hierarchy of the monastic period arose a church, a market, and the rudiments of systematic civil government."\*

Gradually, therefore, Sutton grew, and by the reign of Edward the First was thought worthy of representation in Parliament. The name of *Plym-mouth* began to supersede that of Sutton, but the ancient name lingered till 1439, when a charter of incorporation was granted, and thenceforward Sutton became Plymouth. But long before this it had begun to make a name in the history of England. In 1287 there mustered in the Sound and in the rivers Tamar and Plym a great fleet of 325 sail, under the command of the Earl of Lancaster, brother of King Edward the First, for the expedition to Guienne. In 1339, at the time when Edward the Third was laying claim to the throne of France, Plymouth was attacked by the French, who burnt seven ships, and who, though driven off by the townsfolk, led by the Earl of Devon, with the loss of 500 men, returned within two days, burnt a large part of the town, and the remainder of the ships. Plymouth did not forget this when seven years later she combined with Saltash and Millbrook to send twenty-six ships and 603 men to the siege of Calais. In the same year was fought the battle of Crecy, and it was apparently at Plymouth that the Black Prince landed on his return, still covered with the glory of that great victory.

In 1355 the young hero was here again, this time with his father. Once more the Sound was filled with ships, which, ere long, to the number of 300, set sail across

\* Bellamy's "Thousand Facts in the History of Devon and Cornwall."

the Channel for another invasion of France. After the battle of Poitiers, Plymouth once more saw the Prince. A triumphant fleet entered the harbour bearing not only the hope of England, but the pride of France. For the Prince came not alone. With him was King John, his youngest son, and some of his nobles—all hostages for the proper observance of the treaty of Bretigny. It is said that on his progress to London the youthful conqueror was feasted by all the towns on his way—an attention none too great for one whose magnanimity was such that he “stood at the French King’s back during the meal, constantly refused to take a place at table, and declared that, being a subject, he was too well acquainted with the distance between his own rank and that of royal majesty to assume such freedom.”\*

How different the next occasion when the Black Prince landed beneath the Hoe! But fourteen years had gone by since Poitiers, and he was still a young man. But the hero’s days were numbered. The expedition to Castile for the restoration of the ungrateful Pedro the Cruel, though successful, had undermined his health; the ill-success of the campaign against Charles, and vexation caused by the knowledge that the hard-won territories in France were slipping from his grasp, still further enfeebled his constitution, till, unable to mount his horse, he succumbed to the inevitable, and left France for the last time. When he reached Plymouth he was too unwell to continue his journey, and was fain to accept the hospitality

\* Hume—who says, by the way, that the Prince landed at Southwark. Froissart asserts that he landed at Sandwich; but both are wrong, for Richard Izaak, Chamberlain of the City of Exeter, who in 1681 published certain extracts from the city records, has, under the date 1357, the following: “Prince Edward brought over to England John, the French King, and sundry of his noblemen, all as prisoners, who landed at Plymouth, and from thence came to this city, where they were honourably received, and so conveyed to London.”

of the Prior of Plympton. After resting awhile he was borne to London on a litter, and, after a lingering illness, died in the forty-sixth year of his age, "leaving," as Hume says, "a character illustrious for every eminent virtue, and, from his earliest youth till the hour he expired, unstained by any blemish."

The French were not slow to take advantage of the decadence of English power. Once more a fleet sacked Plymouth. But its recovery was speedy, and in 1377, six years after that last sad landing, and but one year after the Prince's death, we read that the town was fourth in population in England, ranking next to London, York, and Bristol. The return was 7000, but as it was made for the imposition of the poll tax—the same that in 1381 caused Wat Tyler's insurrection—it is probable that the population was somewhat in excess of that figure. The present population is about 85,000, and yet Plymouth is far from being the fourth town in England now. So does population vary: manufactures extend—and what is a village to-day may to-morrow be a town of tens of thousands.

It was about this time that Plymouth began to be fortified. Most writers give the credit to Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter, but, although he doubtless assisted the undertaking in every way, and was instrumental in the erection of the most important part, the fortifications were commenced in 1374, twenty-one years before he ascended the episcopal throne. In 1378 we find that Richard the Second granted a hundred marks yearly for twenty years and the customs duties for six years towards the cost of the defences then being erected by the Prior of Plympton. It was not till 1416 that Bishop Stafford came forward by granting an indulgence to those contributing towards the erection of two towers and other works, and he was followed by Bishops Lacy and Veysey. This was Plymouth Castle, described by Leland as "a strong castle quadrate having at each corner a great

round tower." Holinshed, however, who wrote nearly half a century later, calls it a "blockhouse." This castle stood on a rocky point at the east end of the Hoe, and commanded the Cattewater and Sutton Pool. With the exception of the remains of a tower in the outworks of the Citadel, and some fragments of a gateway in Lambhay-street, it has now disappeared, but the name *Barbican* still preserves its memory.

According to Dr. Brewer, the Cattewater preserves its memory, too. Under *Catwater* (as he spells it) he thus writes in his "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable:" "This is a remarkable instance of mis-translation. The castle at the mouth of the Plym used to be called the Château; but some, thinking it would be better to Anglicise the French, divided the word into two parts—*chat* (cat), *eau* (water)." This is really very funny—so funny that one is almost tempted to marvel whether the learned Doctor is trying a little joke at our expense. Many attempts have been made to explain the meaning of Cattewater, but none have been very successful. It is better, I think, to say at once that the origin of the word is lost in obscurity. If it has been discovered now, the best we can say is that it is found in *fable*.

In 1403 Plymouth once more suffered from a descent of the French. Their leader was Du Chastel, Lord of Brittany, whose subsequent fate near Dartmouth is told farther on. More than six hundred houses perished in the flames, but, on hearing that King Henry had defeated Hotspur at Shrewsbury, the invaders, who appear to have been bent on taking advantage of internecine discord, drew off. This was the third time that Plymouth had been burnt, and no wonder that in the petition for incorporation in 1439 the inhabitants plead that it had been "oftentimes for want of enclosing, &c., burnt and destroyed." There are, or were, many street names in the town commemorative

of French attacks, such as *French lane*, *Catch French*, and *Bretonside*, lying to the north of Sutton Pool.

"The first Mayor of Plymouth," says an old MS., "was William Kentherick in the reign of Henry the Sixth. He was a little square man, remarkable for shooting with the strong-bow, and one of the greatest eaters of his time. He gave at the feast during his mayoralty a pie composed of all sorts of fish, flesh, and fowl that could be gotten; it was 14ft. long and 4ft. broad, and an oven was built on purpose for baking it." This would nowadays be called a *squab pie*—though not a true squab pie, mind you; for certain ingredients are wanting that to a true Devonshire man—and still more a true Cornish man—would spoil the whole dish.

After this notable feat nothing of particular moment took place for some thirty years. By that time England was in the throes of the Wars of the Roses, and Plymouth, though too far from the scene of action to be actively concerned, was still, to a small extent, interested. For here in 1470 Warwick the Kingmaker and the Duke of Clarence coming from France proclaimed Henry the Sixth king ere proceeding to London. For a time Edward was forced to fly beyond seas, but he soon returned, and Warwick fell at Barnet field. On that very day—the 14th of April, 1471—Margaret of Anjou, poor Henry's courageous wife, landed at Plymouth with her son Edward and a body of French auxiliaries. Such is the irony of fate! Everyone knows the end. Within three weeks the two armies met once more at Tewkesbury, where "every petal of the Red Rose was scattered from the stem." A few days later Prince Edward was murdered almost in the royal presence, and his heart-broken mother thrown into the Tower, where her gentle husband had just breathed his last.

In the second year of the sixteenth century another unfortunate lady landed at Plymouth. This was Catherine,

Princess of Arragon, who had come to be the bride of Arthur, Prince of Wales. The house in which she lodged was only pulled down the other day to make way—*O! tempora mutantur*—for a Board School! It was an interesting old mansion, built in the form of a quadrangle, and at the time of the Princess's visit belonged to "one Painter, a rich marchant."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PLYMOUTH—AND DEVONPORT.

Devon "Sea-dogs"—The Armada—Drake and Raleigh—The *Mayflower*—The Civil War—Blake—Napoleon *en route* for St. Helena—Some Visitors—A Busy Place—St. Andrew's Church—The "Prysten House"—The Guildhall—Stonehouse—Devonport and the Dockyard—Visit of George the Third—Mount Wise—The Fortifications.

Upon the British coast, what ship that ever came  
That not of Plymouth heares?—where those brave Navies lie  
From cannons' thund'ring throats that all the world defie.

DRAYTON'S "Poly-Olbion."

AND now we come to the period when the annals of the old western seaport are especially glorious; when it was the starting point—the headquarters—of such men as Gilbert, Hawkins, Frobisher, Raleigh, Grenville, Drake, and those other "sea-dogs of Devon" in whom the Virgin Queen placed such reliance that

When she was stogg'd, and the country in a mess,  
She was wont to send for a Devon man, sir.

Hence in 1570, under the command of the good Sir Humphrey Gilbert, sailed "the first European settlers of Northern America;" hence, two years later, sailed Drake for Nombre de Dios with his two little vessels and seventy-three men, and hither he returned, to start again in 1577 for his celebrated voyage round the world. He returned in 1580 to find Plymouth decimated by the Plague, introduced, it is supposed, in a cargo of cotton wool from Smyrna.\* Not-

\* The Plague visited the town again in 1581, and again in 1626, when 2000 people died.



withstanding their troubles, the townsfolk gave him a right royal reception, the Mayor and Corporation met him in state, and there was a great feast. Soon after the Queen knighted him on board his own ship at Deptford, and he was chosen Mayor of Plymouth.

The year 1583 saw the expedition of Sir Humphrey Gilbert set sail for the new world across the seas. Sir Humphrey took possession of Newfoundland, "where his first act was to establish public worship according to the Church of England." But on his return the vessel foundered. The story of how he sat with his Bible in his hand, exhorting the sailors and comforting them with the assurance that "Heaven was as nigh by sea as by land," is familiar to most of us.

The next year Raleigh started again, and discovered the tract of land named by the Virgin Queen after herself—*Virginia*. But the colony established there by him failed, and many of the adventurers died, Drake bringing back the remainder on his return from his great expedition against the West Indies. Notwithstanding this rebuff, Raleigh would not give in, and in 1587 made other attempts. But again he failed, and all he had to show for the £40,000 expended was the potato and tobacco!—and there are doubts whether he introduced the latter after all. Nor was he more successful in an expedition to the South Seas with Cumberland.

Then came the Armada. Once more a great fleet assembled at Plymouth under the command of Lord Howard of Effingham, who, although a Catholic, risked excommunication rather than forget his patriotism. The Armada, delayed by the death of its admiral, and by a tempest, had been so long in coming that some thought the danger over. When the news that it had entered the Channel was brought, the captains were playing at bowls upon the Hoe. With characteristic coolness, Drake objected

to be disturbed. "There is time," quoth he, "to finish the game first and beat the Spaniards afterwards."\* But the other captains persuaded him to leave the game unfinished, and, embarking, they tacked slowly out to sea, for the wind was dead against them. They soon fell in with the Armada, "a crescent, of which the horns were seven miles asunder," and, hanging on its flanks, worried it to such purpose that before the Spaniards reached Calais several of their ships had been taken.

Who does not know the sequel?

Dispersed by the English fire-ships, and still more by storm, some of the great unwieldy galleons and galliasses went ashore on the sandbanks of Zeeland, while others fled northward rather than again face that narrow sea guarded by the sea-dogs of Devon. Tempest after tempest assailed the broken fleet, till, from Cape Wrath to Mizen Head, the coasts were strewn with wreckage. Shorn of ten great ships and 10,000 men, the battered Armada returned to Lisbon. England was saved.

Subsequent events in the history of Plymouth must be passed over lightly. In 1589 Drake embarked with the refugee Don Antonio, illegitimate nephew of Henry, King of Portugal. This expedition, designed to support the claims of Antonio to the Portuguese throne, was a failure. The Plague played havoc with the crews, and only half the number returned to Plymouth. In the following year Drake took part in that great work with which his name will ever be associated—the Plymouth water supply. He brought the water from Dartmoor by means of a leat or artificial channel, though a ridiculous legend (which has more than one version) tells that, as he rode from the moor to the sea, his horse's tail, sweeping the ground, drew the

\* Some think that the game was played at the *back* of the Hoe, on the site of the present Royal Hotel Tap.

water after it. This benefit is duly recorded on the back of Drake's picture in the Guildhall, as follows :

Great Drake, whose shippe about the world's wide waste  
In three years did a golden girdle cast ;  
Who with fresh streams refresht this towne that first  
Though kist with waters, yet did pine with thirst ;  
Who both a Pilot and a Magistrate  
Steered in his turne the Shippe of Plymouthe's state.

Another poetical allusion to this great service is to be found in an old book\* published in 1592, when Drake was Member of Parliament for Plymouth, and dedicated to him. There are four verses, all highly eulogistic of the great seaman, comparing him—very much to their disadvantage—with certain ancients. The two first verses refer to the water supply, and the bard thus uplifts his voice :

Let Jason, Tiphis, Hercules,  
And all the men of fame  
Whom Greece is wont to bragge much of  
Loose now their former name :  
For workes of greater price and praise  
Our Drake hath taen in hand,  
And eke perfourm'd ruling the ships  
In flouds, and flouds in land.

The irksome drought that Plimmouth felt  
Full long all parts distrest,  
Industrious Drake by bringing home  
Fresh waters hast redrest.  
What better thing effect might be ?  
What more of thankes and fame ?  
So great a worke did once advaunce  
Of Hercules the name.

Besides the expeditions we have mentioned, others were fitted out in 1595 by Raleigh, Drake, and Hawkins—the former for the continent of America, the latter for the West Indies. Space fails to record the voyages of Cavendish, Oxenham, Cox and Parker, Grenville and Frobisher, all of

\* "The Art of Arithmeticke," &c. Written in Latin by P. Ramus, and translated into English by William Kempe. (*Vide* W. A., vol. ix., p. 59.)

whom sailed from Plymouth, or to give details of the great expedition against Cadiz under Howard and Essex in 1596—the year that Drake died at sea.

England his heart ; his corps the waters have  
And that which rays'd his fame became his grave. \*

It was about this time, too, that four Spanish ships pursued by French pirates took refuge in Plymouth Harbour, running, as it were, into the very jaws of the lion. Their cargoes, destined for the use of Elizabeth's great foe, the Duke of Alva, were promptly seized, whereupon the Duke "laid an embargo on all the English at Antwerp," and the Queen retaliated by making the Spanish Ambassador a prisoner! These were stirring times, and one passes with regret from the glorious days of Elizabeth to the feeble reign of James, in which occurs the next memorable incident in Plymouth history.

This was the arrest of Sir Walter Raleigh, one of the last of the brave men who had made the names of Elizabeth and of England so glorious. Raleigh had been of late unfortunate. His connection with the plot to place Arabella Stuart on the throne, though of the slightest, had condemned him to long imprisonment, and, had not the cupidity of James been excited by the stories of the wealth of Guiana, he might have died in the Tower. But, anxious to lay hands on some of this wealth, the King set him at liberty, and in March, 1617, Raleigh left Plymouth with a fleet of twelve ships for South America. But the "gold mine" was never reached, and little was done beyond sacking the Spanish town of St. Thomas. The other adventurers, fearing the King's rage, forced Raleigh to return to England, and about Midsummer, 1618, he reached Plymouth for the last time. He was arrested by Sir Lewis Stukeley, carried to London, and, to please the Spaniards, beheaded; not on the ground of piracy—the people would

\* Richard Bamfield in "The Encomium of Lady Pecunia, or the Praise of Money," 1598.

not stand that—but on the old charge of fifteen years before. Whether Raleigh was justified in attacking his old foes (as he maintained) I leave for historians to determine. But he was *unfortunate*, and the unfortunate are always in the wrong. It was a sad ending.

Ah! what a life! Is this the goal  
Of all his bold emprise?  
Well did he write, Ambition ends  
In two brief words—"Here lies." \*

In the reign of Elizabeth, a body of Independents, or Brownists as they were called, after their founder, Robert Brown, had taken refuge from religious intolerance in Holland. In 1620 they determined on emigrating to the new settlement of Virginia, and, returning to England, embarked from Southampton in two small vessels, the *Mayflower* and *Speedwell*. But off Dartmouth the latter put back, and the *Mayflower* proceeded alone. The last English port at which she touched was Plymouth, where the "Pilgrim Fathers," as they are called, were so "kindly entertained and courteously used by divers friends there dwelling" that they gave the name of New Plymouth to their settlement on the coast of Massachusetts.

Not that they were the first colonists sailing from Plymouth. A company called the "Plymouth Company," acting under royal charter, had tried to effect a settlement some years earlier. And so, as Mr. Worth says, "the first attempts to settle what is now the great republic of the West were made by Devonshire men sailing out of Plymouth Sound."

In the Civil War Plymouth went Parliamentary. Only a few years before (1625) the inhabitants had "superbly entertained" the King when he visited the town on the occasion of the gathering of another expedition against

\* From a ballad written by A. P. Martin, "The Execution of Sir Walter Raleigh," published in a volume entitled "Fernshawe."

Cadiz—an expedition which failed ignominiously. Perhaps this failure may have had something to do with the determined resistance to the royal authority in 1643, 1644, and 1646. The first siege, conducted by Prince Maurice, the King's nephew, lasted for three months. But by this time the town was well fortified, and the Prince, finding that he could make little or no impression, and having lost many of his force, raised the siege on Christmas Day. During this siege an incident happened which may well have led the sturdy Puritans to believe that the Lord indeed was on their side. Shoals of pilchard suddenly made their appearance in the harbour and in Sutton Pool. So great was the quantity that the besieged were able to dip them out with baskets.\*

The next siege lasted nearly six months, and a summons to surrender from the King in person had no effect on the determined men of Plymouth. Then followed a blockade, which lasted till Fairfax, advancing westward, scattered the remnant of the Royalists; Mount Edgcumbe, which had been garrisoned for the King, fell, and Plymouth was relieved. Meanwhile, taking advantage of the war, Sallee rovers and other pirates, who had long been the terror of the Channel, captured vessels by the dozen. A fleet of these pests lay off the Land's End, continually on the watch, their captains openly boasting that they would not leave an English ship afloat.†

It was while entering Plymouth Sound on his return from the capture of the Spanish plate fleet at Teneriffe that the scourge of these pirates, Admiral Blake, breathed his last. Cromwell gave him a magnificent funeral in Westminster Abbey, but the heart of this great seaman lies in St. Andrew's Church, "by the door of the Mayor's pew." Few characters of that stormy time are finer than that of this admiral of the Commonwealth. The

\* Bellamy, p. 32.

† Walcott.

strife of parties moved him not; he went steadily on with the work that he had in hand, regardless of the actions of his master, Cromwell, although some of them provoked his strong condemnation. His business was the good of England. "It is not for us to mind state matters," said he, "but to keep foreigners from fooling us." Blake was a man of few words, and a letter addressed to the Admiralty which I came across the other day is, even among despatches, a model of brevity. "Please your honours and glory," it runs, "yesterday met with the French fleet, beat, killed, took, sunk, and burned, as per margin." It is to Blake that we owe the long streamer which floats from the main truck of our ships of war. When Van Tromp hoisted a broom to his masthead in token that he would sweep the sea, Blake replied by lashing to *his* masthead a horsewhip. That horsewhip is our present pennon.

The last great personage who visited Plymouth Sound came as a prisoner. This was the fallen despot Napoleon, who lay here in the *Bellerophon*, waiting for the *Northumberland* to take him to St. Helena. The excitement caused by his presence was extraordinary. An eye-witness writes that "the Sound was covered by one entire mass of boats, filled with people. Every boat that could swim was there, from the splendid barge to the little cockleshell, *and so closely were they wedged together that no sea could be seen.*"\* One of the visitors was Charles Eastlake, afterwards President of the Royal Academy, and he managed to get near enough to make the sketch which afterwards became the great picture of "Napoleon Standing at the Gangway of H.M.S. *Bellerophon*," and which fetched a thousand guineas.† It is said that Napoleon was so interested that he not only stood still, but sent his clothes ashore to enable the young artist to make the picture as

\* "Western Antiquary," vol. vi., p. 275.

† It is now, I believe, in the possession of Lord Clinton.

perfect as possible. Was this vanity or good nature? This was the last great historical event in the history of Plymouth, and, in the opinion of a well-known West Country writer, it was, "after the opening of the Salamis of England by Drake, probably the Plymouth event of chief European interest."

But Plymouth has been the birthplace or home of many an artist besides Eastlake. Here were born James Northcote, Johns, Samuel Prout, and Haydon; and here lived Cook, an artist whose water-colours—particularly his seascapes—it would be difficult to surpass. From among men of literature Plymouth claims Joseph Glanville, born there in 1636; Dr. Zachary Mudge, the noted preacher; the poet Carrington; Dr. Bidlake, Bampton lecturer; Dr. Kitto, the great Eastern traveller; Leach, the naturalist; and John Prideaux, the eminent chemist. I do not know whether John Cookworthy, the Quaker, who discovered the valuable properties of china clay, was a native, but his manufactory was at Plymouth before the industry was removed to Bristol, and, as all china fanciers know, specimens of his "Plymouth" china are eagerly sought after.

Dr. Johnson visited Plymouth in 1762 in the company of Sir Joshua Reynolds—who, by the way, was also a native of the neighbourhood, being born at Plympton. He stayed with Dr. Mudge, and was much impressed with "the magnificence of the navy and shipbuilding," which "afforded him," he said, "a grand subject for contemplation." The "contemplation" of West Country fare seems to have moved him still more, for he indulged in new honey, clotted cream, and cider to such an extent that his friends feared for his health.\* But the man who could drink nineteen cups of tea at two guineas, or thereabouts, a pound was hardly likely to restrain himself over such homely—if bilious—luxuries as honey, cream, and cider. With regard to the

\* Mackenzie Walcott.



tea story, I am told that the lady of the house, in irony, asked him if he would like a *twentieth* cup, and, on the Doctor gruffly responding in the affirmative, rang the bell and told the servant to bring him a stable bucket!

On this Devonshire excursion the grave and ponderous Doctor appears to have unbent, and returned almost to the days of his childhood. On one occasion he actually ran a race with a young lady, kicking off his shoes as he ran, and, in spite of his proportions, he came in the winner, "leading the lady back in triumphant delight."\*

Another visitor, also a worshipper of the good things of this life, was Quin, the actor. He said that Plymouth folk with such an abundance of John Dory and grey mullet ought to be happy indeed. But when he heard that they were content to enjoy these delicacies without melted butter his disgust was intense. "Sweet country!" he exclaimed; "there is nothing sweet in it but the vinegar." But what can one expect from a man who travelled all the way to Bath on purpose to taste a Torbay sole fresh? †

"It is hardly correct to call Plymouth a watering place. We associate with this term all the paraphernalia of summer seaside holiday: sands or shingle, with swarms of children digging in the beach, Paterfamilias in easy dress looking on; dropping into the reading-room, pulling over a telescope; bathing machines, donkeys, go-carts, and a general scene of relaxation, garnished with much flirting and walking about by moonlight on the pier. But at Plymouth and Devonport the sea means business. Government buildings occupy the best situations. Officers and officials, orderlies, sailors, and shipbuilders have their work to do, and do it with an incessant going to and fro which wholly hinders the calm sense of recreation that marks a watering place. Why, the best hotels in the place have no view of the sea. Everybody has something to look

\* W. A., vol. iii., p. 25.

† Walcott.

after that concerns it, but they do not care to potter on the shore."

Thus the author of "The Regular Swiss Round" in an amusing paper on South Devon published in an old volume of the *Leisure Hour*. It is quite true. They do *not* potter on the shore; *in primis*, perhaps, because there is no shore to potter on. The coast line below the Hoe is rocky, and although, since our author's day, a promenade pier has come into being, where there is doubtless "much flirting and walking about by moonlight," the sands are as absent as ever, and, officials or no officials, business or no business, children can scarcely dig without material. And, save one, the hotels are all down in the town, which lies, as I have said, at the back of the Hoe. So much, indeed, does the Hoe intercept the sea view, that except at the eastern and western ends of Plymouth and high up at the back you cannot see the sea at all. But it is a fine town, for all that, and its situation—in spite of the intrusive Hoe—on ground gently rising towards the dim background of Dartmoor, gives it at a distance quite an air of dignity.

There is not a great deal of the old town left. What there is, or, at any rate, the principal part of it, we shall pass through presently. No one visiting Plymouth to-day would imagine that its origin was so ancient. And there is an air of life and movement about its streets which still further conveys the impression that Plymouth is a town of modern impulse. It is more cheerful than most provincial towns, for the dull raiment of the civilian is varied by the scarlet of the military and the beloved blue of the Jack Tar.

The oldest building is St. Andrew's Church, a building unusually large and spacious, the aisles of equal length with nave and chancel. It dates from the fifteenth century; and succeeded an earlier church for which the town was indebted to the Priory of Plympton. A worthy Mayor named Yogge gave the tower, a handsome piece of Perpen-

dicular work. It was built in 1460. During the visit of Charles the Second and his brother the Duke of York, "his Majesty under a canopy of state attended Divine service and touched several persons for the evil."\*

A building nearly as ancient as the "old church" (as it is commonly called), is the "abbey," formerly the "prysten house." This priest house has long since ceased to be inhabited by the clergy, and is now a grocery warehouse. The entrance is a good old Perpendicular archway of granite, over which are ogee-headed windows divided by transoms. It seems a pity that it should have fallen on such evil days. Surely it might be devoted to some purpose which, if not purely ecclesiastical, would still be more in accordance with its ancient *status* than the use to which it is now put.

Another noticeable church is Charles Church, commenced during the siege, but not consecrated till 1664. It was dedicated to "Charles the Martyr," or, as the Puritans would have called him, "the man Charles Stuart." As an example of seventeenth century Gothic, Charles Church deserves great praise, and the spire is—for the time—really fine.

The other churches are modern. So, too, is the Guildhall, close to St. Andrew's Church. But it is one of the handsomest buildings of its kind in the country. Its length is 146ft., its width 85ft., and it is 70ft. high. At each side is an aisle, divided from the central part or nave by monoliths of polished granite. The tower rises to a height of nearly two hundred feet. The windows are of stained glass, and illustrate the history of Plymouth. One of them, known as the Siege window, was given by the descendants of those actually engaged in that stubborn defence. A statue of Sir Francis Drake stands on a pinnacle without, and within is his portrait painted in 1594. The old

\* Bellamy.

Guildhall, a building of no interest, has been converted into a Free Library.

In the Plymouth Library, Cornwall-street, is stored a rich hoard of artistic treasure. Here is the Cottonian collection, the gift of the late Mr. Wm. Cotton, of Ivybridge. The Italian masters are represented by nearly three hundred original sketches and other drawings ; there is a large collection of prints, paintings, and bronzes. The paintings include three portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds—of himself, his father, and youngest sister.

Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport are known locally as the Three Towns. But for some years they have been practically connected, and, seen from the water, or from any height in the neighbourhood, appear to be one large town. In reality, however, they are separate, and each has its own governing body. Plymouth is by far the oldest. In fact, Stonehouse and Devonport are both, comparatively speaking, modern.

Stonehouse takes its name, prosaically enough, from a *stone house* built by one Joel, lord of the manor in the days of Henry the Third. Save for the Government establishments, it is not an interesting place. These consist of the Naval Hospital, the Marine Barracks, and, at the southernmost extremity, abutting on the water, the Royal William Victualling Yard—I believe the largest affair of its kind in the kingdom. This is no place for statistics ; but those who delight in such things may be glad to know that the designer was W. Rennie, of Breakwater fame ; that the cost was the same as that great work—namely, a million and a half ; and that it covers about fifteen acres, with a sea front 1500ft. in length. Every comestible necessary for the use of the Navy is here provided, and one fairly gasps at being told of the tons of meat, biscuit, &c., that go to make the bone and muscle of our defenders. Forty-eight bullocks a week is ordinary business, and a

sack of flour is ready for the oven in two minutes and a half.

Let us turn from this overpowering establishment and cross the bridge spanning Stonehouse Pool, the creek dividing it from Devonport. Although Devonport, as a town, has grown up almost within the present century, the dockyard is more than two hundred years old. It was commenced in the reign of William the Third—a very small affair, not one tithe the size of the present yard. Until 1823 both town and dockyard were known as “Plymouth Dock,” or simply as “Dock.” But the inhabitants petitioned George the Fourth to change the name, and the growing town became Devonport, the Doric pillar called the Devonport Column being erected to commemorate the change. The old name, however, stuck to the dockyard—it was still Plymouth Dock, and it was not till 1843 that the Queen signalised her visit by commanding that it should take the name of the town.

The dockyard, which is *the* thing at Devonport, is some seventy acres in extent, and gives employment to over three thousand men. In it can be manufactured everything necessary for the building of the largest battleship. Description is useless; you must go and see it—this scene of labour, but, at the same time, of perfect order, for, as a local historian remarks, “the dockyard looks anything but a busy place on entering. Everything is so quiet and so prim, from the large square chapel to the trim little avenue which leads to the terrace whereon the resident officers live, that one might almost imagine that the Government had taken a turn at a ‘strike.’ But a very few minutes will dispel this idea, by taking the visitor into the midst of bustling though orderly activity—where docks and building sheds, shops and smithies, rope-houses and mast-ponds, wharves and jetties, elbow each other in what to the stranger must be a most bewildering fashion.” \*

\* Worth’s “South Devon.”

Devonport was not the place originally pitched upon as the site for a dockyard. The authorities preferred Saltash, but, with a shortsightedness which their descendants must bitterly deplore, the inhabitants of that ancient borough refused to entertain their proposals. "What!" said they, "destroy our gardens, and perhaps *increase the poor rates!* Never!"

An amusing incident is related in connection with the building of the North Dock. During his visit to Plymouth George the Third inspected the new dock, and, observing that the size was larger than that originally intended, asked for an explanation. He was informed that the dock, as at first designed, would only hold the largest *British* ships, and that it was being altered to receive the *Commerce de Marseille*, the great French man-of-war then building at Toulon. And, strange to say, the *Commerce de Marseille* was the first ship to enter it.\*

This visit of "Farmer George" was a very grand affair indeed. When he and Queen Charlotte went on board the *Impregnable*—"which fired a royal salute while their Majesties were *ascending* her;" rather trying, one would think, to the Queen—they were accompanied by a cutter rowed by six young women attired in black bonnets, white gowns with nankeen safeguards, and purple sashes bearing in gold letters the words "Long live their Majesties." What "nankeen safeguards" may be, I do not presume to know; but doubtless this crew of Amazons looked very charming, and, we may be sure, attracted a great deal of attention. What awkward ladies they must have been to tackle in the old days of the pressgang, and we may imagine them perfectly ready to fall foul of anyone who attempted to take from them their male friends. An amusing story of those "good old days" is told by the Rev. W. S. Lach-Szyrma.† An officer engaged on press-

\* Worth's "Devonport."

† W. A., vol. xi., p. 189.

gang duty was beset by a crowd of these ladies, who informed him that never, no never, should he have their Jacks, their Bills, their Joes. But that officer was a student of human nature. Very ungallantly he snatched the caps from half a dozen female heads, and threw them on the ground. For a moment sentiment was vanquished by love of dress ; the ladies scrambled for their headgear, but, when they had recovered the same, lo ! their lovers were in the hands of the pressgang.

Devonport, like Plymouth, gets its water supply from Dartmoor by means of a leat thirty-seven miles in length. This leat was made in consequence of the refusal of the Plymouth Corporation to grant water from their supply. There seems to have been a good deal of feeling between the towns, and one of the Plymouth aldermen actually called upon Dr. Johnson, and asked his opinion upon the Dockers' boldness. The Doctor, out of pure fun, entered *con amore* into the dispute. He said : "I am against the dockers ; I am a Plymouth man. Rogues ! let them die of thirst, they shall not have a drop." And Alderman Tolcher gravely informed all whom it might (or might not) concern that the great Dr. Johnson agreed with him.

To the south of Devonport, facing the sea, is the height of Mount Wise. There once stood upon it the mansion of Sir Thomas Wise, who dwelt there in the reign of the Merry Monarch. At that time most of the Mount was a furzy waste ; it is very different to-day. To a great extent it is covered with military buildings and fortifications, but there is still plenty of room for promenaders, who from its seaward front enjoy a magnificent view of the Sound, the mouth of the Tamar or Hamoaze, and the wooded steeps of Mount Edgcumbe. The semaphore on the summit is the last of a line of thirty-two that a generation ago stretched from Plymouth Dock to London. It was used to telegraph to the Admiralty the arrival of Napoleon, and communicated

the intelligence in fifteen minutes ! To-day the semaphore is only used for signalling the shipping, messages inland being, of course, flashed by the electric wire. Still one looks upon the semaphore with respect. To convey intelligence from the Tamar to the Thames in a quarter of an hour—and this eighty years ago—strikes us as wonderfully quick work. We are tempted to wonder whether science has advanced so very rapidly after all.

The fortifications protecting the three towns are very extensive, and extend from Staddon Heights on the east to Tregantle in Cornwall on the west. There are some sixteen or seventeen land forts, while in the sea, just within the Breakwater, is a great iron fort of immense strength, and batteries cover nearly the whole of Drake's Island. All date from the present century—most, indeed, were erected within the last fifty years. Prior to 1860, Plymouth, according to modern ideas, was fortified very inefficiently indeed, the principal defence being the out-of-date Citadel. Had it not been for the fleet, she must have suffered even more severely than was the case at the hands of invaders. The eulogy of Lord Coke on the ships of his day is scarcely excessive. "For beauty," he says, "they are so many royal palaces ; for strength so many moving castles and barbicans ; and for safety they are the most defensive walls of the realm." I wonder what he would have written had he lived in the last decade of this nineteenth century. The beauty of our ships of war is certainly not palatial now, and, though their strength is immeasurably greater than that of the old three-decker, their safety is certainly less, when a touch from the ram of a sister ship can send one to the bottom in a few minutes.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### FROM PLYMOUTH SOUND TO THE YEALM.

The Barbican — Mount Batten — Turnchapel — Archæological "Finds" — Staddon Heights — Bovisand — The Mewstone — An Original Letter — Wembury — The Yealm Estuary — Newton Ferrers — The Dolphin — Noss.

BUT we must now say good-bye to the Three Towns and renew our exploration of the coast. From the Barbican a ferry steamer crosses the Cattewater to Turnchapel. To the Barbican, then, we descend by steep St. Andrew's-street, where may still be seen one or two ancient tenements that carry the thoughts back to the days of Elizabeth. And there are more in Notte-street at the bottom, though of late years they have put on another face. I suppose it was necessary, this coating of rough cast and these new beams, but one cannot but regret that these houses, where doubtless once dwelt some "sea-dogs" of the Armada, should have been "improved" almost beyond recognition.

Other interesting houses will be found in New Street, and one of the finest now left is in Higher Street. And there is, or, rather, was, for it has been pulled down now, another house of mediæval days in the neighbourhood of the Barbican, as Leland describes it, "a goodly house toward the haven." In a street between Notte-street and the Free Library (it used to be called Catte-street, but the name, like the building, has disappeared beneath the march of improvement) stood Palace Court. I have already referred to this building as the house of one John Painter—

a kind of Plymouth Dick Whittington in that he was no less than four times Mayor of that ancient borough—and as the lodging of poor Catherine of Arragon. At that time it could not long have been built, for the “rich marchaunt” himself received the Princess. Its story scarcely survives its disappearance, for all that a friendly policeman could tell me was that “*kings* used to live there.”

The Barbican Quay occupies the site of what was once part of the Castle. Many an armed warrior must have landed here to ascend to the fortress above, many a challenge must have rung out across the still waters of Sutton Pool in those—happily—far-off days when the hand of every man was raised against his neighbour. But all this is changed. Peace reigns at the Barbican—that is, if peace *can* reign where there is much noise. For the Barbican is noisy enough in all conscience, especially during a fish auction. It is the Billingsgate of Plymouth, and Billingsgate, as we all know, is not exactly a land of silence. Nor is Billingsgate fragrant. Neither is the Barbican: it is of the fish—fishy, not to speak of other odours wherewith the passing breeze is charged none too lightly. But it is picturesque, and the stone quay, the tall houses, nearly every one more or less a “marine store,” and the sturdy fishing boats with their richly tanned sails have been committed to canvas over and over again.

The Barbican and its purlieus are much affected by the children of Israel. Hebrew names are plentiful, and at one shop in particular facing Sutton Pool I can remember being served by a maiden who might well have been a relative of that dreadful old Lazarus so vividly portrayed by Baring-Gould in the pages of “Court Royal.” But I saw no Joanna, nor do I think that the Barbican of to-day could produce anything half so sharp as that handmaid. Not that the young ladies of the Barbican are dull. Far from it. They can drive a bargain as well as the best—somehow the

neighbourhood of a fish market always is conducive to bargaining—but Joanna was exceptional.

As we move on to the pier where the ferry lies waiting, we pass a granite flag let into the pavement. The inscription—"Mayflower, 1620"—is brief enough, but it means a great deal. It means that from this very quay, the best part of three centuries ago, the "Pilgrim Fathers" set sail for that new land over the sea which is now peopled with their descendants.

The dingy little steamer casts off her moorings and steams slowly across the estuary. On the right is the peninsula of Mount Batten, the highest part crowned by a round tower, which in the days of the Civil War was a fort. It will be noticed that the door is high up in the wall, so that the tower must have been impregnable except to shot and shell. It is now a coastguard station. Threading the shipping that lie along the southern shore, we presently reach the wooden pier of Turnchapel and disembark.

Turnchapel is the most uninteresting of villages. There is literally nothing to see. Across the mouth of the creek are the Oreston Quarries, where was discovered the cave which excited so much interest in the breasts of the learned—both zoologist and geologist. It was full of the remains of the lion, tiger, horse, hyæna, elephant, and rhinoceros. As the cave was 35ft. below ground, and had no apparent aperture, ages must have elapsed since it became the charnel house of these animals. Some idea of the antiquity of the remains may be gathered from the fact that the stalagmite contained the fossilised jaw of a horse.

But remains of another kind have come to light near Turnchapel. On the hill behind the village you will see Stamford Fort, one in the long chain of fortifications guarding the three towns. When the workmen were excavating for this fort, they came upon an ancient burial ground. The graves were about four feet in length and,

besides human remains, contained glass and pottery, some very corroded iron implements, bronze mirrors, fibulæ, and bracelets. From the shape of the graves it is thought that the bodies must have been placed in a sitting posture. There were no coins, save one of Vespasian, though some British gold money has been found at Mount Batten close by. It was a great "find" for the archæologists, and the relics add considerably to the interest of the collections at the Plymouth Athenæum. The most valuable item is without doubt the bronze mirror with engraved scrolls on the back, since, according to Mr. Spence Bate, "only three of similar character are known."\*

Nor are these the most ancient remains found by the shores of Cattewater. At Cattedown, on the north side of the harbour, there is, or, rather, was, a bone cavern containing the bones of a dwarfish race whose antiquity can only be guessed at. These remains were mingled with those of the lion, rhinoceros, hyæna, bison, and other animals, and were "sealed up with stalagmite in some places four or five feet thick. . . . How many ages have elapsed since these primitive inhabitants hunted the wild animals which at some time existed in this neighbourhood it is impossible to say."†

So the interest of Turnchapel and its neighbourhood is of the past, and the antiquities by Stamford Fort will attract more notice than the fort itself. To one wholly ignorant of matters military it is much like all other forts. An excellent road connects it with other fortifications on Staddon Heights, and this road we will follow, until we reach the coastguard path branching from it on the right, and which follows more faithfully than any road the sinuosities of the coast. Here, as elsewhere, where the path approaches

\* *Vide* his illustrated paper in vol. xi. of the "Archæologia."

† "Notes on Cattewater." By Robert Burnand. "Western Antiquary," vii. 121.

the edge of the cliffs, it is marked at intervals with whitened stones, without which, some dark night, the patrol would stand a very good chance of making an involuntary descent on to the rocks below. There is nothing very bold about the scenery so far. On the left the downs slope up towards the hideous rifle screen; below, the cliffs fall away in broken declivities to the shore. Here and there comes a dip—almost a combe—giving shelter to hazel bushes, and even an ash or two. It is all very soft and pretty, but it is not striking, and, fresh from the rocky bluffs of North Devon, seems very mild indeed.

But as we reach the corner immediately beneath the rifle screen, and pause for a moment to look back, one of the noblest panoramas in the country is unfolded before us. At a glance the eye takes in the broad Sound, the Tamar estuary, the green lawns and stately timber of Mount Edgcumbe. Midway is Drake's Island with Devonport behind, connected by Stonehouse with Plymouth, which sweeps round the head of the Sound and ascends towards the hills behind. The Cattewater is partially hidden by Stamford Hill, but you can see Laira Bridge across the Plym, and a bit of Saltram Park, the seat of the Earl of Morley; while, overlooking all, the long undulations of Dartmoor bound the horizon from Cocks Tor near Tavistock to Pen Beacon above Cornwood.

Rounding the corner, the path drops to the coastguard station above Bovisand Fort, which stands close to the water's edge commanding the little pier built for the accommodation of the boats of Her Majesty's Navy, which come in here for water, supplied by a great reservoir on the hillside capable of holding 12,000 tons. We pass at the back of the fort, and descend to Bovisand Bay, a pleasant little cove framing in a picture of Penlee Point on the opposite coast of Cornwall, the fishing village of Cawsand shining in the afternoon sun, and, in the middle distance, the

Breakwater—here for the first time showing otherwise than a straight line—with its lighthouse and beacon. Notwithstanding the ugly casemated fort, it is a picturesque feature. Down the valley behind, almost hidden among reeds and cresses, comes a little brook, whereat many a picnic party has filled its kettle, for the spot is a favourite one with the Plymouth folk, and on a fine summer day is seldom deserted.

Retired it indeed is. Bovisand House, a short distance up the valley, is, with the exception of the Government buildings, the only dwelling in sight, and you will have to walk a very long distance before you see another, even to Wembury Church tower away towards the Yealm. For the shore eastward is desolate, and only saved from barrenness by the intrusion of an occasional field, and, after awhile, even this ceases until you get well beyond the Mewstone. As for the cliffs, they practically end with Staddon Point, the grassy downs sloping to low precipices seldom more than twenty or thirty feet in height.

The path winds onward. Some ruined cottages passed, we are abreast of the Shagstone rock, standing half a mile or more out to sea. When I last sailed by this rock a portion of the wreck of the P. and O. liner *Nepaul* lay at its foot, just showing above the heaving tide. The *Nepaul* fortunately went ashore in calm weather, or there might have been a serious loss of life. Happily all were saved.

There is little cultivation—here a field of potatoes mingled with thistles (the thistles having the best of it), there an acre or two of turnips. By-and-by even this comes to an end, and we are on the downs. There is not much life. A hawk wheels upward from his eyrie below, a stonechat dances from rock to rock, and from among the gorse on whirring wing shoots a cock pheasant. This is all. Not even the bleating of a sheep varies the monotonous dirge on the reefs below.

But there is one feature in this somewhat featureless land. Suddenly a rocky peak rises over the shoulder of the downs, and, as we turn another corner, the Mewstone opens out against a background of deep blue sea. The Mewstone is an island—a very small one, not more than a mile in circumference, but of bold outline. The lower slopes are grassy, but rock breaks out everywhere, and the summit, two hundred feet above the tide, is a crag bare as a Dartmoor tor. The colouring is rich. Down where the restless waves break in foam, the tints are brown and ochre ; higher, the slaty rock is a dark blue, at sunset merging into purple ; higher, again, the shading is paler, as though bleached by the sun and storm to which the crest is ever exposed.

The Mewstone is uninhabited now, though this was not always so. When the island was owned by the Calmady family, a man was kept there to supply them with fish and the rabbits with which the rock abounded. It must have been a cheerless abode in winter, when the spray flies over the topmost crag, and Wembury Church can have seen little of the lonely fisherman and his wife from September to May, for the Mewstone is nearly a mile from land. A curious taste to accept exile to a spot so isolated, yet one not wanting followers even in these latter days, for, quite recently, I read in the papers that another couple—men this time—were building a wooden house on a still wilder islet off the Cornish coast, with intent to take up their residence therein. Either they are crossed in love, or, like the Athenians in the days of Paul of Tarsus, grievously in want of “some new thing.”

The last inhabitants of the Mewstone were one Sam Wakeham and his wife—the ruins of their cottage may still be seen—and they appear to have derived a precarious existence out of excursionists, fishing, and the produce of a little garden. A letter published in the fourth volume of

an extinct magazine known as the *South Devon Monthly Museum*, shows what life on this rock was in 1834. Although the wording of Sam's epistle is not, like the language of the Gubbins band, "the very dross of the dregs of the vulgar Devonian," it is still pretty bad; like Chaucer, the Lord of the Isles, as the editor facetiously terms him, "couldn't spell a bit." I think you will agree with this editor that a document so unique is "too good to be left out;" so here it is:

"On bored the moostone septembur the fust Sur, i ham verry mutch obliGed to u for puttin a drawen of the moostone an mi howse into youre booke an i Rite this to tel u that no won cant wark from the moostone to the shoar At lo warter for a six ore gig as i nose could be toed over the roks without runnen fowl of it or a smawl bote mite sale over in good Wether squire kill maid he nose the same i ave a been livin hear a long time an i Never seed the hole beech all across dry at No time whatsumdever the See warshes over sum part of them for i Nose all the roks an goes down their to pik sof crabs for bate gainst i goes a chad fishin and me wife youre hum Bell servant

"to cumhand samel warkeam

"Po. scrip.

"if any genteelman what likes a wark he can wark to the shoar At wembury and if they holds up there white pocket-hanchecuffs for a signal an ile cum off in me bote and fetch them to the island for two pence a pease an you furgot to say that theres a bewtifull landin place dead easterd on the iland an sum stairs that i made to cum up for the ladeys an ile be verry mutch obliGe to put this in your booke you maid a mistake I be not forty ears old i be only 39 and 6 munths

"samel warkeam

"P.s. Youve a forgot To say that ive a got a bewtifull Kayl plat for the gentlemen an ladeys for To play to KeEls and



shut rabets at nine pens A pease eccept the panches for me  
piggs and kiP the jackits ov em

"An my missus hasent got no hobjecksuns to boyll the  
kittle and make the tay pon the Kayll Platt and hand the  
tay Pot out of the winder an put a tabell outside the  
winder an every thing humBell and comfortabell."

I leave the reader to interpret this extraordinary specimen  
of "English as she *was* wrote" threescore years ago as  
best he may, merely explaining that "squire kill maid he"  
was not a sanguinary ruffian, but Mr. Calmady, Sam's  
landlord.

Unfortunately Sam's fondness for the "main chance"  
brought him into trouble. Perhaps the "gentlemen an  
ladeys" did not sufficiently patronise the "kayl plat" or  
enough "rabets at nine pens A pease" did not fall to the  
fowling pieces of the local sportsman out for a holiday Or  
maybe the "Missus" lacked opportunity to "boyll the  
kittle" often enough to keep another pot boiling. He took  
to smuggling, did Sam, was found out, and had to retire  
into private life.

The shallow bay between the Mewstone and Wembury is  
haunted by gulls—indeed, it is said that the island owes its  
name to the multitude of sea birds, or *mews*, that make it  
their breeding place. Except upon Lundy, I do not know  
that I ever saw so many in one spot as in the western  
angle of this bay. The water was literally alive with them.

We leave the downs behind, and fields again appear  
coming to the very beach. Straight ahead, where the land  
rises, the lonely church of Wembury looks down from its  
hillside. Even at a distance there is something peculiar  
about its appearance. As we approach, this peculiarity is  
explained. The churchyard is surrounded with a wall,  
which, towards the sea, where the ground falls away  
suddenly, is of some height, and supported by heavy  
buttresses, giving the place a foreign, semi-fortified look.

It seems a queer spot on which to erect a church, for the village is quite out of sight a long way off up the winding valley. About the church are one or two cottages, a few farm sheds, and a mill, the latter built so close to the beach that the stream which turns the wheel falls on to the very shingle. The whole group presents rather a woe-begone appearance, for there is no life in the place. The dozen or so of souls that make up the population are away most of the day in the fields, and, save a labourer moving about in the sheds, and three or four masons engaged in the restoration of the church tower, I do not remember seeing a human being at Wembury.

Yet the place is not unknown to history. If we are to believe the antiquary, it is the *Wicganbeorch* of the Saxon Chronicle. "This year" (851), says the Chronicle, "Ceorl the ealdorman with the men of Devonshire fought against the heathen men at Wembury and there made great slaughter and got the victory."\* But I do not think that it was on the beach below Wembury Church that the Danes landed. The bay is very shallow and dangerous, but close by is the Yealm, a deep river, and navigable for some distance. It is much more likely then that the "heathen men" would, after their fashion, steal up with the tide and land on the western bank, probably near the spot where now stands South Wembury House.

Wembury is the birthplace of Walter Britte, an Oxford scholar and distinguished mathematician. He was a disciple of Wickliffe, and on his master's death "upheld the doctrines which that great reformer had so nobly and fearlessly proclaimed."

The church is said to date from the thirteenth century, the oldest part being the north aisle. It has been well restored, and the wagon roof, pulpit, and bench ends

\* J. A. Giles' Edition (Bohn). In a footnote he states that it was Wembury, near Plymouth.

are noticeable, while the organ chamber is inclosed by a good parclose screen. There is a fine reredos and a beautiful font of local marbles. At the west end a striking monument, also in local marbles and alabaster, commemorates Elizabeth Calmady, who married Sir John Newbrough. Her epitaph is quaintly written, but as Mrs. Grundy might take exception to its appearance in print we will omit it. Her kneeling figure placed on the top of a large sarcophagus is very graceful.

Another notable monument is in the chancel. Beneath a heavy Jacobean canopy lie the figures of Sir John Hele and his wife—the latter with a comical little child in an armchair at her feet. Below them is a kind of frieze consisting of ten kneeling figures.

This Sir John Hele was one of the worthies of Devon. He was Serjeant-at-Law to Elizabeth and James the First. On land in Wembury parish, which had long been the property of his forefathers, he built a magnificent house which commanded so beautiful a prospect of sea and river that old Fuller enthusiastically compared it to Greenwich itself. But, after standing nearly two hundred and fifty years, the property changed hands, and the house was pulled down.

A laconic inscription may be seen on a small slate headstone near the south side of the tower. It runs thus :

Henry Kembil  
died Nov. 25: 1725  
'Tis over with your friend  
MIND THAT.

I believe that the coastguard path is continued by the cliffs, or, rather, slopes, to the mouth of the Yealm estuary. I say I believe, for, in a weak moment, I followed, or attempted to follow, the directions of a son of the soil, who recommended a "short cut" over the fields at the back of the church. The result was that we struck the Yealm too

far inland, a mile or more to the north of the Ferry at Yealm Pool. Now, all pedestrians know how annoying it is to have an unnecessary bit added to the tale of the day's march. Fortunately, however, we had, on that occasion, only been tramping for about four hours, so, whatever our sentiments,

We spake not a word of sorrow,

but steadily addressed ourselves to the plod seawards. And when we came suddenly in sight of the deep, narrow estuary almost shut in by its lofty wooded hills, our little blunderings were forgotten altogether. There, right under our feet, the dark green water—green with the reflections of the woods opposite—stole inward from the sea (for the tide was flowing), scarce stirring the handful of yachts that lay at their moorings out in mid-stream.

It is a lovely spot, and, as I have before remarked, the wonder is that the Yealm, or, as the Devonian calls it, the *Yam*, is not more visited. Excursion steamers come over from Plymouth, it is true, but the "trippers" only stay the allotted time of an hour or two and then return. No artist is seen on the hillside or along the picturesque rocky foreshore, although there is work for a hundred of them. No boating man sends his outrigger flying over the smooth water; there is not even paterfamilias pulling a happy party of children under the cool shadow of the trees. Half a mile from its mouth the Yealm is a watery desert.

Not that I would have this charming estuary over-run and cockneyfied. Far from it; I prefer it as it is. But I have, or conceive that I have, a duty to my readers, and to keep my impressions of the beauties of the Yealm to myself would, my conscience—none too tender a plant—tells me, be selfish. I daresay the difficulty of procuring lodgings may prevent some people from coming to the banks of the Yealm, but these are the purple and fine linen

ones, who must needs fare sumptuously every day. But there are many—and even in this luxury-loving *fin de siècle* I would fain believe they are the majority—who, I feel sure, would, if they did but know of this peaceful and beautiful spot, gladly put up with a lodging in the upper part of Newton Ferrers (I really cannot recommend the lower part, much less Noss), or at Wembury. I can imagine few pleasanter ways of spending a holiday than by pitching your tent in a quiet spot like this, where, especially if you hire a boat, you can take your fill of healthy exercise and artistic enjoyment. And at Newton Ferrers you can hire a boat for next to nothing. I have had one, all to myself, for more than three hours for eighteen pence.

The Yealm meets the sea between two round headlands, the further covered with trees almost to the summit, which is crowned with one of Lord Revelstoke's lodges. This side is more or less bare, and as we wind down the rough track past the coastguard "look out" to the Ferry, there is nothing to impede the view. Just now we caught a glimpse of Noss Church over the corner of the plantation above Newton Creek; now it is hidden by the hillside. It was our landmark for Newton Ferrers, where we mean to spend the night. How are we to get there? Here is the Ferry, but where is the boat?

The question is soon answered. At the magic cry of "Over!"—you do not shout "Ferry!" in these parts—a boat steals out from the now deepening shadows and moves slowly across to the little quay where we stand watching the transparent water lapping against the piles. He is a reasonable being is the ferryman, and listens attentively while you explain to him that Newton Ferrers is your bourne, and that, if he lands you at the usual spot on the road to Noss, you will lose much time and have to get another Charon to ferry you across the branching

creek. Could he not land you now at that lifeboat house on the Newton side? It is only about two hundred yards further, and—you offer him sixpence. That does it. The good fellow's fare for the ordinary passage is but a penny, and lo! here is his obolus multiplied exceedingly. And so we march into Newton Ferrers along the pathway that skirts the creek while yet there is light to see the windings of the Yealm.

Newton, when we look out upon it next morning, is a picturesque village stretching along the waterside, and making some effort to climb the steep road that leads to the church—a venerable building pretty much on a level with the modern church of St. Peter the Fisherman on the other side of the creek. There is a homely inn at the hill foot, appropriately named the Dolphin, for the landlord is a fisherman—they are all fishermen at Newton and Noss. From it there is a delightful view of Noss, and of the wooded combe behind it. At night the Dolphin is a lively place. Hither come the men of the village, and the little common room is alive with song and laughter. They are temperate folk, these fishermen, and though they take their liquor kindly enough, they take still more kindly to their games. And such games—games that the young man of the town would turn up his nose at—games that nowadays are seldom seen save in such out-of-the-way corners as this. The middle of the apartment is occupied by a long and terribly battered piece of furniture somewhat resembling a bagatelle board. Round this throng congregate a merry crowd engaged in the mysteries of “parlour skittles,” while at a table behind, a little knot of quieter souls are looking earnest over dominoes.

And in the bar parlour, a scrap of a room about eight feet square, the mantelpiece is adorned with strange monstrosities in “chaney.” Here is a Highlander leaning against a gigantic sheep about three times his size, yet



NEWTON FERRERS. FROM A SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR.

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

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garnished—the sheep, not the Gael—with a red ribbon round the neck. A tall gentleman in a costume *à la* Claude Duval is carrying a spaniel, while a diminutive lady, standing on a bridge beneath which swims an impossible swan, leans gracefully upon his shoulder. A third ornament represents Colin and Chloe going to market on a steed of no equine tint, whose stomach is well supported by foliage. This is no exaggeration. I write these words in the very room with these objects before my eyes. To many they are ghastly enough; but the people love them, and who shall say them nay? High art has not reached Newton Ferrers, nor, at any rate during the present generation, is it likely to. Not even the school board shall improve such things out of the land. Indeed, I have a sort of sneaking affection for them myself.

Outside, by the low wall that overlooks the scraps of gardens and the creek with its line of fishing boats, is the promenade of Newton Ferrers. But the promenaders, mostly men, do not walk much. The promenading, for the most part, seems to consist in shifting from one foot to the other to make room for some Jack or Bill who has just come in to tell of some piece of luck or the reverse—fishing is not always good—off the Mewstone. But, whether the luck be good or bad, they smoke seriously on, making, as Mark Twain would say, quite a “repast” of it, leaning their elbows on the coping, and staring reflectively at the water below. They do not talk much, but the talk—to them—is often weighty. It is the village Forum, and its presiding spirit is our host, as burly a specimen of the sons of Zebedee as you need wish to see. And his rusty black Norfolk jacket seems almost a mark of distinction among the more common blue jerseys and guernseys of the smaller fry.

You wake at the Dolphin to the cooing of wood-pigeons in the woods opposite. I know nothing prettier in our

West Country—and I have travelled far—than the scene which greets you as you lift the window curtain of your bedchamber. The sun is shining brightly on picturesque Noss, bathing the fields on one side of the creek in a flood of light, though on the other his rays have but touched the tree tops. Long reflections rest upon the water, only disturbed as some early fishing boat creeps slowly up with the tide.

But at low ebb the scene is not quite so attractive. The waters disappear altogether, and Noss is divided from Newton by a wide channel of silt, which, under a hot sun, or, indeed, under no sun at all, is anything but savoury. And if you cross by the stepping stones you will find Noss scarcely sweeter than the bed of its creek. The lower part of Newton is not altogether fragrant, but at Noss sweetness is at a discount. It is very, very far behind the times in the matter of sanitation. And yet it has had warnings. About 170 years ago a pestilence carried off all but seven of its inhabitants, and in 1849 it was ravaged by cholera. Newton escaped. "Nobody died over this side," they will tell you with pride, "except a person who *would* go to Noss, and he brought back the cholera with him."

Still Noss is not as bad as it was, and, had it not been for the "pig-headedness of two people" who would not consent to Lord Revelstoke's scheme of improvement, might by this time have been as free from danger of disease, and certainly quite as sweet, as the waterside street of Newton Ferrers. What a pity it is that so lovely a spot should suffer prejudice because two cantankerous individuals prefer their own selfish ends to the public good!

## CHAPTER XX.

### BIGBURY BAY.

An Interesting Church and a Sumptuous One—Stoke Point—Revelstoke Church—Lord Revelstoke's Drive—Mothecombe—Inns—Mouth of the Erme—Fording the River—Ringmore—A Persecuted Priest—Bigbury—Bread and Cheese and Cider—Mouth of the Avon—Borough Island—Thurlestone—The Bishop and the Clerk—"Counter Alto" and "Terrible"—Hope—White Ale.

LET us ascend to the church of the Holy Cross, noticing, as we turn the corner of the Dolphin, the base of an old Cross, probably as old as the church itself. The guide book published by Mr. McBryde to passengers by his steamers says that "The plan of the edifice is unique and the orientation very marked, there being two distinct turns to the north, typical of the way the Saviour's head was bowed on the cross." The church, as its name implies, is cruciform, and the uniqueness refers, I suppose, rather to the unusual breadth of the transepts than to the "orientation"—a feature common to many churches. They are, indeed, so wide as to partake of the character of aisles.

It is an ancient church, the chancel dating from about the twelfth century. The east window is Early English, the three lights separated by slender detached columns. Of the same period are the sedilia and double piscina. The reredos, of marble and alabaster, represents the Expulsion from Eden and the Annunciation. A fine modern screen shuts off the organ; another, under the tower, is faced with old bosses and figures of angels, which look as if they had formerly stood at the wall plates. Painted figures of

saints fill the panels of the oak pulpit, and the intersections of the wagon roof "are adorned by no less than three hundred and seventy bosses, each of a different design." There are three hagioscopes, one on each side of the chancel, the third on the north side of the nave piercing an angle in the wall, and thus opening up the north transept, where, in bygone days, there was probably an altar. The font, of Blue Anchor alabaster and polished granite from Dartmoor, is so beautiful that a replica has been made for St. Peter's Church, Guernsey. In the churchyard are some venerable yews ; one in particular must have seen many centuries.

There are two ways of reaching Noss. One is by crossing the creek, at high water by boat, at low water by stepping stones (a not very cleanly transit)—the other by following the road round by Bridge End at the head of the creek, a *détour* of more than a mile. There is nothing to see at Bridge End itself, though at some distance beyond it is the principal entrance to Lord Revelstoke's mansion of Membland, and it is said that the hammered iron gates by De Wilde are the finest in England. Not being particularly interested in gates, and preferring a hundred yards of water to a mile of hard road, we get the landlord of the Dolphin to put us across in his boat, and in five minutes find ourselves standing breathless—for it is a steep climb—beneath the tower of Lord Revelstoke's new church.

Alas ! it was locked, and repeated knockings at the door of the custodian's cottage elicited nothing but empty sounds. Evidently he was from home. We wandered round the garden, and even ventured to peer through the windows—for which we hope we shall be forgiven—but there was no sign of life. It was provoking, for, although I do not pretend to take such interest in new churches as in old ones, still one does not meet every day with a village church costing, as I was told, nearly £30,000.

And so we had to take on credit the information that, owing to the steepness of the hillside, the vestry is *under* the church, that there is a beautiful altar, triptych, and frescoes, not to speak of the marbles lining the chancel walls, and wonderfully carved bench ends, pulpit, and roof. The worst of it is that nearly all the beauty of this church is *inside*—the exterior calls for little admiration; indeed, the contrast between the dark stone of the main fabric and the almost white dressings of the windows and tower are rather severe. It wants the mellowing hand of time.

But the view below, of the creek winding down towards Yealm Pool, with the ancient cottages and church of Newton Ferrers on the one side and the combe and woods of Noss on the other, is quite sufficient recompense for the climb, and with regret we turn from it and make our way back to the cliffs.

There are many pleasant lanes about Noss, and one of them leads up the combe past Natton Farm and over the fields to Stoke Point, a headland of slate, great slabs of which lie about the base. Here we get into Lord Revelstoke's private drive, and, if we have permission, can follow the coast line with ease, if not with dignity, for a considerable distance. This road commands a very fine view of Bigbury Bay, a curve in the coast extending from Stoke Point to Bolt Tail. It is not a populous piece of seaboard. Along the whole ten miles one does not see a single house, with the exception, that is, of Hope, a tiny village stowed away in the furthest angle. But the coast comes towards us with a fine sweep, past Borough Island at the mouth of the Avon—you can just see the estuary over its lower end—past the mouth of the Erme, marked by a rugged opening in the cliffs, and so onwards, the smooth surface of the slate rock shining in the sun like grey satin. Nor is it satin only. Vegetation does not stop at the brow of the precipice, but creeps down its face in many a trail of ivy and tuft of grass.

Immediately below us there is very little cliff at all, the ground sinking into a kind of amphitheatre, which shelters a croft or two, some trees and bushes, and even an orchard. Down in this lea, close to the cliff edge, so close that in gales the spray beats upon its walls, is the deserted church of Revelstoke, the ancient parish church of Noss—deserted for the fine new building above Newton Creek.

There was certainly excellent reason for the erection of the church of St. Peter the Fisherman, for, like Wembury, this old building is about as far from the populous part of the parish as it well can be. But there is something very pathetic about it, and it looks sad and forlorn down at the end of the long, steep lane now so grass-grown and forsaken. No house is near, at least not near enough to be visible, nor is any sound audible but the whispering of the leaves answering the low murmur of the tide on the rocky foreshore below. It is an old building and has features embracing all three styles of Gothic architecture, and a "saddleback" tower, almost the only one I have seen in Devonshire. Part—the south aisle and chancel—is still roofed over, and contains a few seats for those attending weddings and funerals, for parishioners may still be married or buried here if they list. The whole building is being rapidly covered with ivy, that faithful friend of the old and forsaken.

Lord Revelstoke's drive runs along the side of steep slopes covered with gorse and underwood to a solitary cottage. At this point the road, circling round a deep hollow, turns inland, and ends, so far as we are concerned, in a lane that runs over high ground some three or four miles to Mothecombe at the mouth of the Erme. From this there is little view of the coast, a strip of blue sea through a gateway being the only indication that the cliffs are near. But it may be questioned whether this route is not preferable to that by the coastguard path. For we have seen the coast

already from above Revelstoke Church, and there are no particular features of interest along the route except the Anchorist Rock, a tor about thirty feet in height, upstarting suddenly from a brake of furze. Downs, fields, and brakes alternate most of the way; the cliff scenery is scarcely grand, and the walking laborious.

But every opening in the hedge on the landward side of the road commands a far-reaching view. Over the wide cultivated valley rise the southern heights of Dartmoor, and perhaps for the first time you appreciate at what an elevation—how, indeed, over the very feet of the moor—runs the railway. Although at least seven miles distant, you can distinguish one of the new granite viaducts recently erected in the place of those graceful but not altogether safe structures of timber which previously carried the railway over the border valleys. At one point, as nearly as possible due north, the moor is scarred with white seams—the china clay works at Lee near Cornwood.

Within a mile of the Erme, where the road begins to descend, there is a pleasant short cut across some fields into a shady bridle-path sunk deep between high banks, a place famous for its blackberries. This way leads to Mothecombe, a sunny hamlet on the slope of a green combe that opens on to a beach of firm sand just where the Erme enters the sea. There is no church at Mothecombe; the people have to go to Holbeton, more than two miles away. Neither is there an inn; and, by the way, it is noticeable how church and inn usually go together. Wherever in a country village there falls the shadow of a church tower, there you are almost sure to find an alehouse. Their companionship is, of course, due in great measure to the ancient fashion of riding to church, when the master, having first lifted his mistress from her pillion, led the steed that had carried both to the stable. But the growth of

chapels, nonconforming and conforming—otherwise chapels-of-ease—the introduction of mission-rooms, and other aids to devotion have, by shortening the distances, rendered riding to church no longer so much of a necessity as in days gone by. Still the inns remain, and, if they do but little business on the seventh day, manage to make a living on the other six—and, besides, how handy they are for weddings! What the humble swain and his new-made “missus” would do without the “public” to turn in at after the nerve-shaking ceremony of matrimony it is difficult to imagine. On the whole, if properly conducted, the village inn may well stand near the village church. And, to tell you the truth, I have wished before now that there was a church at Mothecombe. It was as much as I could do to get a little bread and milk at one of the cottages.

Half a mile away is a coastguard station commanding the mouth of the Erme. This is the point to make for if you wish to cross that river, and, by taking a lane at the back of the village and then crossing some fields, it may be reached without difficulty. This Erme is rather a troublesome river to negotiate. At high water, when it is nearly a quarter of a mile wide, the coastguard, who are, almost always, genial fellows, will perhaps put you across in their boat, but at low tide this is impossible unless you can get a boat further up the river by the weir, for the water is not only very shallow, but there is a wide belt of sand between the station and the water. The best way is to wade, but let no one do this without consulting the boatmen. For the Erme, though shallow, is swift, and the transparency of the water is apt to deceive the eye. Nevertheless when the tide has quite run out the passage is safe enough, and not more than a hundred and fifty yards wide. I have waded across myself, keeping close to the north side of a pile of stones lying about the centre of the channel, and steering for a ruined limekiln nearly in a line with it on the



further shore. It was nowhere knee deep, and, as the coast-guard remarked, "had I waited a quarter of an hour longer it would not have been much above my ankles." But on no account should the attempt be made when the tide is rising.

No vessel is seen on the waters of the Erme, for, even at high tide, the approach is full of shoals and rocks. An old writer tells us how King Philip of Spain lost two ships here in the days of Henry the Seventh, "when he was dryven to lande in the West Country by rage of weather."\*

It is a pretty river this Erme, though you cannot see much of it at Erme Mouth. Still the distant vista of heavy foliage coming right down to the water's edge—the woods of Flete—with a blue Dartmoor hill in the background is some earnest for the scenery up stream. It is, I think, more densely wooded than any Devonshire river, and has so many windings that at high water it looks like a chain of lakes. But its course is short—almost as short as that of the Yealm, with which it runs parallel from its fount in a boggy part of Dartmoor.

There is not much variety to be found in following the coast line of a great bay of which the whole extent can be seen, not only from either horn, but from almost any point between. And I am bound to confess that the latter part of this walk—from the Erme eastwards to Hope—is a little monotonous. For when you have reached the top of the first long slope above the river, you see much the same panorama as that which has been before you for the last three hours. The only difference is that the spire of Malborough Church looms up larger against the sky line, though it is still a long way off, and Borough Island is near enough for you to see the yellow neck of sand which at low water joins it to the main land. Looking westward, the Anchorist Rock stands out boldly on the rough slope,

\* Holinshed's Chronicles, edition 1587, p. 24.

and the ruins of Revelstoke Church are just distinguishable among the trees and bushes inside Stoke Point. But the worst of it is there is no chance of food. The farms stand far back from the cliffs, and, even if we took the trouble to find them, it is doubtful whether we could get anything like a meal. In these lonely homesteads they are anything but profuse in their hospitality to the stranger. "Hadn't they even some milk?" we asked at one farm further up the coast. "No; they wanted it for the calves." "Could they sell us a little bread and cheese?" was the question asked at another—the very next. "No; they had nothing," and they looked at the questioner with suspicion, evidently regarding a man who carried a knapsack as a kind of superior tramp. So we shall be glad enough when, having been up and down the sides of a good many little valleys opening on to the cliffs, we can turn to the left up a pretty combe to the village of Ringmore where there is an inn—a poor one certainly, but better than nothing.

Ringmore is the prettiest village in this part of South Devon. It lies at the head of the combe, half hidden by the elms and apple trees that cluster about and below its quaint little Early English church. The picturesque appearance of this church is increased by the ivy which is allowed freely to climb the walls, and, when I saw it last, it was further glorified by a magnificent Virginia creeper, which flung its red and gold foliage right over the chancel roof.

The low, massive tower (which is crowned with a short spire) is peculiar in that it has no arch communicating with the church. It does not appear to be as old as other parts of the building, notably the north transept, which is Norman, if not of earlier date still. "It retains," writes the rector, the Rev. Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph, "in its north transept—the Manor Chapel—a portion of the old cruciform church which, beyond all doubt, was

standing in the far-off day when our saintly Confessor-King was alive and dead." In the troublous days of the Rebellion a chamber in this tower was the hiding place of William Lane, the rector, who, for his loyalty to a falling King, was hunted down by the Government. Here for more than three months he was supplied with food by his devoted parishioners, until one day it was reported that his place of concealment was known, and he was obliged to fly to France. After awhile he ventured to return, but not to his parish. Persecution still reared its head. So, to keep his family from starvation, this poor priest became a labourer, and worked at the limestone quarries at Hope's Nose near Torquay. But, just as he had begun to see the dawn of prosperity, the crew of a French privateer landed and pillaged his dwelling of everything. Well might the unfortunate have exclaimed, "Save me from my friends!" For the vessel "carried the commission of the exiled King, for whose return to have his own again the poor victim of this untoward outrage would willingly have laid down his own life." Soon after this, worn out with suffering, Lane died on his return journey from London, whither he had repaired on foot to complain of the villainous conduct of the minister thrust upon his former parishioners by the Roundheads. It is a sad story—few even of that time are sadder.

Over the chancel arch is a pattern in fresco painted upon and therefore exactly following the lines and colouring of a more ancient work, discovered, I think the rector told me, when his church was restored. In the chancel itself is an old chair interesting to Devonshire antiquaries as having been at one time the property of Dr. Oliver, author of the "*Monasticon*." On the wall hangs an *Icon* or image of the Greek Church, brought from Sebastopol.

During our walk over the cliffs we shall have noticed

lately a church spire nearer than that of Malborough, rising from the high ground a little inland from Ringmore. This is the spire of Bigbury Church, a building containing some interesting features, and, as it is but a short walk from Ringmore, we will pay it a visit before once more returning to the coast. The nave of this church is of the usual Perpendicular, but the chancel is of earlier date, and has a good Decorated east window, piscina, and ogee-headed sedilia. There is, besides, an old carved pulpit, and a massive granite font. In a little side chapel (now, of course, seated like the rest of the church), communicating with the chancel by a hagioscope, is another piscina, and, set in the eastern wall, a mutilated brass showing the upper half of a female figure, said to represent a lady of the Bigbury family, and to date from about 1440. The only inscriptions are short ejaculatory prayers in Latin to Jesus and Mary cut on scrolls. On the opposite wall is a slab of slate, bearing beneath the incised figures of John and Jane Pearse the following punning epitaph :

Here lie the corpes of John and Jane his wife  
 Surnamed Pearse whom death bereaved of life  
 O lovely Peirce untill death did them call  
 They objectes were to love in generall  
 Living they lived in fame and honesti  
 Dieing they left both to their progeni  
 Alive and dead al waies their charitie  
 Hath doth and will help helples poverti  
 By Nature they were two by love made one  
 By death made two againe with mournful mone  
 O cruell death in turning odde to even  
 Yet blessed death in bringing both to Heaven  
 On Earth they had one bed in earth one toombe  
 And now their soules in Heaven enjoy one roome  
 Thus Pearse being peirced by death doth peace obtaine  
 Oh happie Peirce since peace is Pearse's gaine  
 He dyed the 10 day of December 1612  
 She dyed the 31 day of Julie 1589.

In referring, some time back, to the difficulty of procuring

refreshments in these out-of-the-way districts, I mentioned that there was an inn at Ringmore. I did not speak of it, it will be remembered, with any great enthusiasm; in fact, it was only as a *pis aller* that I mentioned it at all. My companion fancying the appearance of this humble hostelry no more than I did, we agreed to wait till we reached Bigbury. For six hours we had partaken of no food save the succulent but not very satisfactory blackberry, and it was with feelings of pleasant anticipation that we left Bigbury Church behind and descended to the village inn. One of us, at any rate, indulged in visions of something more substantial than the usual bread and cheese, though the other, from long experience of these "publics," felt pretty sure that he indulged in vain. And so it turned out. Was there no meat? No; the butcher only called once a week. Then could we have ham and eggs? (We were not so keen for ham and eggs, by the way, at the end of that walk.) No; they had neither. We could have cheese, and we could have cider. And with bread and cheese and cider we had to be content.

And here I may remark that the villagers of South Devon appear to dine off very little else. Except when we came to a town, it was always the same, "bread and cheese and cider—bread and cheese and cider," until we began to loathe both. And for breakfast, and, indeed, for supper too, we had to take the edge off our appetites with ham and eggs. Sometimes, indeed, chops were to be had, but the butcher—when there *was* one—would seem to have killed a sheep for our especial behoof, as they were always most exasperatingly fresh, and therefore as tough as whipcord. Now, bread and cheese and cider are excellent things in their way, nor should the nose of contempt be turned up at ham and eggs. But these delicacies pall after a time. The French have a proverb that you cannot even sit down to a partridge every day without wishing that

partridge somewhere else, and *toujours ham and eggs* is worse than *toujours perdrix*. If they would only cut the ham decently one would not so much mind, but they have hardened appetites or digestions, or both, these Devonshire peasants, and a slice—I mean slab—of ham less than an eighth of an inch thick would not be “vitty.” We *had* looked forward, not unreasonably, I think, to many a breakfast off fish. We had such a breakfast *once*—at London prices in a Torquay restaurant!

Filled, then, with the melancholy satisfaction that a large meal of bread and cheese and cider cannot fail to induce, we turn once more seaward and descend through the fields at Mount Folly Farm to the river Avon. This is a more formidable river than the Erme, though it meets the sea in much the same manner, flowing over yellow sands, where you may see—

The curled white of the coming wave  
Glassed in the slippery sand before it breaks.

It will not do to attempt to wade it. But a shout will soon excite the attention of one of those fishermen, busy over their boats below the little white hamlet of Bantham opposite, who, for a small consideration, will ferry us over to the eastern shore. There is nothing to see and less to do at Bantham, but the one row of cottages is perched pleasantly enough on the summit of a low green cliff. I shall never forget Bantham, for, wonderful to relate, I once lunched off ham and eggs there instead of bread and cheese.

Borough, or Burr Island as it is called in the soft, slurring speech of Devon, which has been before us for so many miles, is the principal feature seaward. It rises from the water to the height of about one hundred feet, scarped boldly down on the western side, but on the eastern descending in grassy slopes. At one time a chapel to St. Michael stood upon the summit, but this has long

disappeared, and the "tea house" which occupied its site has nearly crumbled away, too. The only building upon the island is a public-house. As it was unapproachable, except by boat, at high water, and in a district sparsely populated, it is not remarkable that it did not pay, and it is now deserted. So, with the exception of the rabbits and perhaps a few sheep, the island is uninhabited. Murray says that it is a great place for the blue squill (*Scilla verna*), and that in the season of flowering the ground has the appearance of being overspread with patches of blue carpet.

From Bantam, or, better still, from the hillside above it, there is a pleasant peep up the Avon. The channel is very narrow, and the ground falls steeply to the waters' edge either in fields or patches of woodland. About four miles of winding and the estuary comes to an end at the village of Aveton Giffard, which overlooks a marshy delta formed by the meeting of the Avon and another stream. Like the Erme and the Yealm, the Avon has its source high up on Dartmoor.

Immediately eastward of Avonmouth there are no cliffs worth mentioning, for the coast is low and sandy. So we will take the path—such as it is—across the fields to Thurlestone, a small village looking down on the sandy beaches and hillocks that stretch away towards Hope Cove. Thurlestone Church, though its tall tower looks imposing enough from a distance, is a forlorn object. The tower is certainly out of the perpendicular, and both walls and roof have undergone more than one "settlement." Inside, things are better, though the style of architecture—a poor Perpendicular—is not very interesting. There is little really worth seeing save a pulpit of carved oak, and a pair of eagles of the same wood used as prayer desk and lectern. Thurlestone, indeed, is what people call an "old-fashioned church"—the sort of church where you would

almost expect the violin and bass viol—where even Tate and Brady might not be altogether extinct. In short, it might be the place where on the occasion of the Bishop's visit the poetical parish clerk ventured to alter the text of the composers, and gave out the hymn as follows :

Why skip thee now thou little hills,  
Thee mountains why dost hop ?  
Is it because you've come to see  
My Lord, the Lord Bi—shop ?

That clerk is not the only Devonshire rustic gifted with powers of composition. I know an old woman near my former home who not only composes verses, but sings them, too. The curate one day chaffingly invited her to sing a duet with him at the next village concert. She accepted with alacrity. But her knowledge of musical terms was not equal to her knowledge of music. "You shall sing *counter alto*, sir," quoth she, "and I'll sing *terrible*." Unfortunately the concert did not come off.

On the shore below Thurlestone Church—we shall pass close to it presently—is the singular arched rock from which the village takes its name—the Thurlestone, or *drilled* stone—a word that is said to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon *thyrelan*, to drill or pierce. A rock upon Watern Tor, Dartmoor, bears the same name, though there the arch or hole is more apparent than real, a near approach revealing the fact that at the top the granite masses do not touch. Nor does it, so far as I am aware, possess the noisy properties of this sea-girt rock. It is said that during a storm the Thurlestone

Roars  
To the wind that roars again,

and that the "trumpet-like sound can be heard as far as Kingsbridge, which is four miles away !"

The Thurlestone is of great interest geologically. It is an outlying patch of the new red sandstone, of course quite



different, both in texture and colour, to the cliffs and foreshore of slate of which the remainder of the bay is composed. The rock, which is about thirty feet high, stands boldly up from the low reefs of the bay, and, as the beach is nearly level, is a very prominent object. It is easily approached, the sea, at low tide, receding some distance beyond it.

One after another three shallow valleys run down to the low sandy shore, each watered by its stream. Up one of them we get a glimpse of the village and church of South Hewish. Beyond these valleys the coast rises again, though the cliffs are low, and the pathway in another mile drops suddenly to Hope, snugly ensconced in a cove within the horn called Bolt Tail.

Hope is a primitive sort of place, but it boasts an inn, where those who have good digestions may perhaps revel in a meal of shell-fish, for Hope, though "a wee place in itself, is a muckle one for crabs." Indeed, the male part of the population appear, when ashore, to do little else but prepare fishing gear. You may see them on the beach stretching the lines from posts as they tie on the cork floats, while all about the hamlet are piles of wicker crab pots, the work of themselves, their wives, and daughters.

Hope is one of the places, too, where the traveller may regale himself on White Ale, a product for which the South Hams—as this part of Devonshire is called—is famous. How it is made I know not, for the secret is shared among a few, but it is a pretty powerful fluid—so powerful that in hot weather it cannot be brewed at all. Nor will it bear transport. "Suppose I were to take a bottle away with me?" I suggested to the landlady of an inn a little further up the coast. "Lor' bless 'ee, sir, t'wud blaw the bottle to bits before you'd walked a couple o' mile." I am quite sorry that I have never tasted this seductive fluid. Exigencies of weather usually compel me to make my

pilgrimages at a time when white ale "won't keep." So whether a former traveller is correct in his remarks about the white ale at Hope I cannot say. He calls it a "milky-looking compound, of which, judging from the flavour, milk, spice, and gin seemed among the ingredients." There is no doubt that white ale is a very ancient beverage, for it is referred to by Henry of Avranches, Court Poet to Henry the Third. It seems to have puzzled him altogether, and possibly gave him a headache, for he says :

Of this strong Drink much like to Stygian Lake,  
Most term it Ale, *I know not what to make.*

White ale may be had at more than one place in South Devon. I can speak with certainty of Kingsbridge, Slapton, and Dartmouth, and I believe it is also to be had at the little town of Modbury.\*

At last the end of Bigbury Bay is reached. Whether "the remoteness of this Cove of Hope is pleasing to the imagination" is a matter for individual taste, but there can be no doubt that "the view from it is suggestive of an unexplored solitude." This bay is indeed a lonely one, and the district has probably altered little in the last hundred years. Nor is the next century likely to effect much of a change. There are no towns, nor even villages of any size, and the population is therefore scanty. The way, too, the district is cut into sections by rivers must always prove a hindrance to free locomotion, even were there decent roads—which there are not. Bigbury Bay is a lonesome place, and, unless some enterprising personage thinks he can make a fortune out of the slate cliffs, is likely to remain lonesome to the end.

\* Since writing the above I have tasted White Ale. It is a grey muddy looking fluid, with a taste resembling beer and egg-flip mixed. Altogether it is an over-rated beverage.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### "THE BOLT" AND "THE START."

A Dangerous Path—Bolt Tail—Wreck of the *Ramillies*—Bolbury Down—Vincent Pits and Rotten Pits—Ralph's Hole—Smugglers—Sewer Mill Cove—The Bull and the Hole—Bolt Head—South Sands—Salcombe Castle—A Plucky Royalist—Salcombe—Portlemouth—The Parson and the Wreck—Prawle Point—Lannacombe—The Start—Wrecks during the Blizzard.

It will not do to linger long at Hope, for before us lies a piece of coast, which, if the grandest in South Devon, is also the most dangerous. The stranger who starts when day is waning to cross the cliffs that lie between Bolt Tail and Bolt Head must be rash indeed. For subsidences and pitfalls are many, and the surface of the ground so uncertain, that even the coastguard patrol has had occasion more than once to alter the line of white stones that here and there mark the track. A landslip occurred quite recently, and there are signs that the movement will continue. This landslip is at the western extremity, and, though awkward enough, is a small affair when compared with the dangers of the crevasses further on which lie on the very edge of the path.

Except the gradual subsidence of part of the cliffs, there is nothing worth seeing on Bolt Tail. Why it is called Bolt Tail no one appears to know, but there seems a vague idea floating about that, as the position of the two promontories forming the eastern and western ends of this piece of coast is similar to that of the "head" and "tail" or feathering of an arrow or *bolt*, the name may be thus accounted for. But I fancy that the word *Bolt* has nothing

to do with arrows or any other sort of missile. Like many another Devonshire name, it is probably of unknown origin, or traceable to some Celtic or Saxon word which the more modern Briton has twisted into the present form.

A lane goes up the combe at the back of Hope village towards the root of the tail—if such an expression be allowed—which will save a considerable corner, and, if you are fortunate enough to secure the company of the coastguard, the farmer will raise no objection to your crossing his fields right away to the signal station above Ramillies Cove. To this spot from Hope is a pretty stiff climb, but you have higher yet to go.

Ramillies Cove, a rocky inlet surrounded by perpendicular cliffs, is the spot where H.M.S. *Ramillies* went ashore in 1760. Twenty-six of the crew managed to get to the rocks, but more than seven hundred poor fellows were swept into eternity.

Higher and higher, till we reach Bolbury Down, a fine, breezy stretch of moorland commanding a wide view westward. On a clear day I am told that the Lizard is visible sixty-five miles distant; Stoke Point, the Mewstone, and the Rame Head almost always are. Once more, and for the last time, we see the whole sweep of Bigbury Bay with its sloping cliffs of grey and green slate, one of them just beyond the mouth of the Avon shining like pearl. Borough Island, too, is a prominent object, and a little this side of it the dark tower of Thurlestone Church rises against the bleak hillside. Behind it is the spire of Bigbury.

Presently we come upon the Vincent Pits. These great cracks or fissures lie between the path and the edge of the cliffs, the beginning of a subsidence which will one day, as the sea eats into the land, bring down in vast confusion the front of a great precipice 400ft. high. The "pits" are of all sizes—here a long crevasse gaping for fifty yards or

more, there a hole a few feet across. Many are fathomless ; a few, where the soil has toppled in, give roothold to shrubs ; but, however shallow they may appear to be, let no one descend, or attempt to explore their depths, for the ground is very treacherous. Formerly gorse bushes were allowed to grow all about these death traps, which were unprotected even by a railing, but the ground has now been cleared. However, the " pits " are still unfenced, and will, I suppose, remain so until somebody loses his life, when the old saying about shutting the stable door after the horse is stolen will once more be illustrated.

A little further on are Rotten Pits. Here, the landslip being nearer the cliff edge, the rock has given way and lies in great masses overhanging the abyss below. The process of subsidence is still going on. Looking down from the path you will see more than one chasm—in the solid rock, too—showing that the time is not far distant when the movement will recommence.

Bolbury Down is famous as the haunt of a notorious smuggler, one Ralph, who, when pressed by the coastguard, betook himself to a cave in the cliffs, and there kept the guardians of law and order at bay with a *pitchfork* ! The cave, or, rather, fissure, still bears his name—Ralph's Hole.

All this wild coast was, in days gone by, a favourite resort of the gentry who preferred to import their own tobacco and brandy, and the " gaugers " had a rough time of it. It is said that the system of picketing on the part of the smugglers was so perfect, that the exciseman stood the poorest of poor chances. On his approach becoming known, the contraband disappeared into all sorts of holes and corners, and the scamps were off across country, sometimes even as far as Dartmoor, there to lie low till all danger was at an end, while their wives and sweethearts down at Hope threw their cottages open with the most perfect *sangfroid* to the search party of the exasperated

officer. There are old men still about the western coasts—I knew one myself, and a fine old rascal he was—who chuckle at “the way we did the gaugers,” and who will, if you only get them into the right mood, spin you yarns by the hour about the good old days “when baccy *was* baccy, and we hadn’t to pay thruppence an ounce for stuff not worth a penny.” I believe half of them would be running cargoes to-morrow were the coastguard but removed, in spite of the heavy penalties and greater facilities for detection. They talk of “the good old times” sadly. An old reprobate with a red nose at Hope Cove told me how in former days they had “cheated the Government,” as he expressed it, and seemed to think they might do so still were it not for the “informers,” who, being entitled to half the penalty, had “spoilt the game.”

The signalmen who spend their time in popping in and out of their solitary little whitewashed huts, and hoisting flags on the staffs—for what useful purpose I could never make out, nor do *they* seem able to explain—will tell you (and glad enough they are of a yarn) what a terrible coast this is for any ill-fated vessel that may come ashore, and how the great tea ship *Hallowe'en* was wrecked in Sewer Mill Cove some ten years ago. We drop into the cove presently, a narrow, rock-bound bay, the sands wet with the waters of two little streams that come down the combe behind. Here, sure enough, between the Ham Stone—the rock off the mouth of the cove—and the beach lie the remains of the ship, which we may look upon without much sentiment as no lives were lost, thanks mainly, I believe, to the Hope lifeboat. Lucky sailors to be wrecked at the only break in the cliffs, for miles !

On the eastern side of the cove is a cavern, which, according to tradition, burrows beneath the cliffs and has an outlet at Splat Cove near Salcombe. It is known as Bull Hole, and owes its name to an adventurous

lord of the bovine species, who, on exploration intent, went in at one end and emerged at the other. But lo! his black hide had become white as snow. Poor bull! we all know—or at least have heard—how the human hair may become white in a few hours. The darkness (not of his hair, but of the cavern) may have been too much for the bull; the uncertainty of his whereabouts distressing to his nerves. For awhile—history does not say how long—he shared

The fate of those  
To whom the goodly light and air  
Is banned and barred, forbidden fare,

and, like the Prisoner of Chillon, his hair blanched.

The name of this cove is so unpleasantly suggestive, that it is a relief to learn that it has nothing to do with drains. Such things do not exist hereabouts, nor anywhere else, I fancy, between Salcombe and Plymouth. The origin of the word is, according to a learned writer, to be sought in the Anglo-Saxon *sæ-ware*, dwellers by the sea. The whole district, he says, is known as the Sewers, even the farmhouses bearing that name. He gives us also another piece of information — a “saying” of the Salcombe people about the Ham Stone. If a married couple remain childless for a year, the husband is derisively told to go and dig up the Ham Stone with a wooden pickaxe.

Again the path ascends, and, passing round a crag overlooking the cove, gains the summit of another down marked about midway by Clewer signal station. It is a very exposed spot, and the furze bushes have been trimmed by the wind into little round hillocks, which, though of course smaller, look like the bushes of box or yew in some Elizabethan garden.

And now we come to the finest part of the walk. Great broken masses of rock top the cliffs, between which you look down precipices fringed at the base with masses of

mica slate, against which, even in calm weather, the swell breaks in a line of foam. But how silent it is! Save the cry of a gull wheeling out now and then against the blue sea or bluer sky, there is no sound at all, for, except in rough weather, the murmur of the waves, more than four hundred feet below, scarcely reaches the ear. Yet somehow the silence is not oppressive. How "a denizen of that revolving purgatory which goes by the name of general society" would feel if alone in this wild cliff-land I cannot say. I myself like such solitudes. I agree with Jerome that "there is much help in silence. From its touch we gain renewed life. . . . Silence gives us peace and hope. Silence teaches us no creed, only that God's arms are around the universe."

It is rather difficult to determine which promontory is Bolt Head. The maps give it as the one projecting the most to the southward, but the Salcombe folk, and, indeed, the world at large, consider "The Bolt" to be the headland crowned by the flagstaff immediately over the entrance to Salcombe River, which is separated from the other by the valley known as Stair Hole Bottom. The doubt is so real, that the friend with whom I first visited this coast, and who had known it all his life, could not give me a decided answer. Probably the name belongs to the whole of this particular angle, and the promontory nearer Salcombe is now generally spoken of as "The Bolt" because its grand broken outline is ever before the eyes of the Salcombe people.

We come upon it suddenly, as the path, skirting a pile of rocks, winds downwards into Stair Hole Bottom. At the same moment another headland comes fairly into view bounding the bay eastward. This is Prawle Point. It is only three miles away, and we can distinctly see the bright string of flags streaming out above the signal station answering other flags hoisted on that great liner driving



steadily up channel. For the Prawle, the most southerly point in Devon, is an important signal station.

The valley of Stair Hole always reminds me of Dartmoor. There is the clear stream, there the rugged tor starting up from the rock-strewn slope of Bolt Head. There are even very fair imitations of those mysterious stone rows over which the antiquaries agree to differ, though here the slabs of slate are set more closely together, being really fences put up as a protection against the edge of the cliffs. The whole place is scattered over with stones and boulders, and, if you turn your back upon the sea, you may, without difficulty, imagine yourself in some shadowy moorland valley.

Whichever route be taken into Salcombe, the scenery is delightful. Those who are "rather past their prime," but yet keep a steady head, will naturally follow the path made by a Courtenay which winds along the face of the precipice midway between summit and sea. Overhead, great pinacles of weathered slate stand out against the sky like ruined towers. Below, the broken cliff sinks sheer to the breakers. Outside, the gulls circle round the Salcombe Mewstone, filling the air with plaintive cries.

But presently the track turns the corner, and lo! the hillside is covered with woodland. Trees, mostly oak saplings, overarch the way, which is no longer a stony desolation, but a grassy glade. Down between the trees, two hundred feet and more, the tide leaps and sparkles against the bows of a white-winged yacht tacking warily up the estuary, for the Mewstone is not by any means the only rock that lies off Salcombe Harbour. In a few minutes, through an opening in the trees, appear the houses of the little town, spreading along the side of the sunny hill that overlooks the narrowing waters of the estuary.

Those who scale the rocky steep to the signal station four hundred and thirty feet above the sea have a view

scarcely inferior in beauty, and even wider in extent. For though the down be bleak and bare, and there is no foreground of leafage, the eye ranges far inland, far along the coast; over the grassy hills that roll upwards from the estuary and away towards Kingsbridge and Stokenham; over the steeper declivities trending away towards "The Prawle.;" over a score of miles of ocean streaked with many a current and traversed by half the shipping of England.

The track descends through a plantation of larches, until at South Sands, half a mile up the estuary, it meets the Courtenay path just where it comes to an end at the road skirting the cove. We pass the mouth of Hanger Mill Combe, with its background of wood and rock, and ascend and again descend past that oddly named mansion the Molt, to North Sands, another cove, where the Brest submarine cable comes ashore. All this side of the estuary is wooded, for which we are duly grateful, for the climate contests with Flushing, near Falmouth, the honour of being the mildest in England, and there is little air to temper the hot rays of the sun. In ancient days, indeed, woods flourished where now is water. Both here, at South Sands, and at Mill Bay, on the opposite shore, the remains of a forest are visible at low water.

On a rocky point at the northern end of the cove stands all that remains of Salcombe Castle, famous for its long resistance to the forces of the Parliament. The Governor, Sir Edmund Fortescue, actually managed to hold this little fort for four months against Colonel Weldon, Governor of Plymouth. When forced to capitulate, the Roundheads marked their appreciation of his bravery by allowing him to march out with all the honours of war, and presented him with the key of the castle, which is still preserved by his descendants.

Salcombe, which, if the prophets prophesy truly, will one

day be a favourite watering place, is to-day a quiet little village-town, the villas embowered in myrtle and other shrubs that love a warm, humid air. There is one long street running parallel with the water—not a picturesque thoroughfare by any means. The upper part of the place is laid out in terraces of semi-fashionable aspect, bordering roads that will look better when they are finished, and, though commanding lovely views of blue water, overlooking at the same time a foreground of trodden turf and family washing. In fact, the place is in an unfinished and chrysalis state; when the butterfly emerges no doubt things will be better.

It is a quiet spot. Even in summer there is little life about it. In a walk down the "long unlovely street" you will probably see no one but a few sailors from some coasting vessel and a yachtsman or two. Two years ago might have been met a thin, stooping figure in loose tweed suit and grey wideawake hat—James Anthony Froude, the historian. For here, in a charming house beyond the Marine Hotel, lived and died the author of "*Oceana*."

Murray says that Salcombe has been called the Montpellier of England. And yet the hills above, and especially opposite to this favoured nook, are bleak and bare, and, though cultivated, the hedges which divide the pastures have few trees, and those are bent and twisted, worn in their battle with the westerly gales that sweep over the high, exposed country about Bolt Head and Prawle Point with great fury.

And now, diving down one of the passages that lead from the street to the waterside, we seek the ferry that shall take us across the harbour—a harbour to which there is no pier but the funny little jetty where the ferry boat lies—to the further shore, the first stage on our tramp to the Start. The ferryman has just come alongside, and sits on his thwart placidly smoking a pipe of which nothing but the bowl projects from beneath his bushy moustache. I have often

wondered how these ancient salts *can* enjoy their tobacco through a stem perhaps an inch in length. I asked this Charon if it did not singe his hair. "P'raps it do," he answered, tranquilly; "but then the hair be used to it." Paying our fare, we landed and climbed the steep hill to Portlemouth Church.

For there is no village of Portlemouth—at any rate, none worth mentioning. At one time a picturesque cluster of houses struggled up the steep hillside from the little cove below the ferry landing place. But it seemed good to the powers that were to pull most of the cottages down, and the aspect of the eastern slope of the Salcombe estuary is consequently very different to what it was thirty years ago. There used to be a delightful old Parsonage, too, with a priest's house adjoining, standing close to the water, round the corner higher up the "river." But that has gone, as well, even to the trees that stood around it, and a square, matter-of-fact house, in which the picturesque element is wholly wanting, has taken its place.

The church is dedicated to St. Oneslaus. St. Oneslaus is a Scandinavian saint, and the legend of his connection with Portlemouth is curious. In the days of the Vikings the shores of the estuary were frequently ravaged by Norse pirates. One of these repented of his evil ways, turned Christian, and on the hill that had looked down on we know not how many scenes of cruelty founded the first church of Portlemouth.

None of this church, as might have been expected, remains. The tower, however, is pretty old, being Norman, though the body of the building is Perpendicular as usual. It is embattled, and altogether has an appearance of some dignity. A curious feature is the approach to the parvise over the north porch, which is by a row of steps built on the *outside* of the wall. Within is a fine screen decorated with painted figures. A tombstone, dated 1782, has an

inscription that will delight the epitaph hunter. It records the tragic fate of a farmer.

Through poison he was cut off  
And brought to death at last  
It was by his apprentice girl  
On whom there's sentence past  
O may all people warning take  
For she was burned to a stake.

She was, however, first hung, the execution taking place at Exeter. The author of "The Kingsbridge Estuary" says that this is the last known instance of burning for poisoning.

In those good old days—of doubtful goodness—when the coastguard did not exist and when the Customs officer, if there was one, knew better than to interfere with those who looked upon a wreck as their lawful prey, Portlemouth Church was the scene of an incident that would have been comical had it taken place anywhere but within the walls of a consecrated building. The parson had got to his "secondly," when a man entered hurriedly, and, mounting the pulpit stairs, whispered in the holy man's ear. The parson's eye glistened, but he restrained himself manfully till he had reached the end of this head of his discourse. Then his pent-up excitement found vent, and shouting "There's a ship ashore between Prawle and Pear Tree Point, *but let's all start fair!*" he tore off his gown, sprang from the pulpit, and, followed by his suddenly awakened congregation, raced across country to the scene of the disaster.

It is a dreadful thing to write, but these men—the parson and his flock—were not anxious to save life, but simply and solely to enrich themselves. What cared they for a few Spaniards? The vessel was a big galleon, and a galleon's cargo must be of value. So the crew were left to their fate; for dead men told no tales, and the love of filthy lucre was stronger than humanity. In vain the poor fellows

cried for a rope. The greedy scoundrels took care that one of sufficient length should not be forthcoming, and the Spaniards were drowned before their eyes. And to this day the coastguard say that they hear voices rising from the surf as they patrol the cliffs at night. One of them, indeed, solemnly assured an acquaintance that he had heard the words "More rope, more rope!" in tones of agony, and that his dog heard it, too, for its hair bristled with terror.

A breezy walk by a road winding over the upland leads to Prawle, a rough sort of village, which looks as if the winds treated it with scant courtesy. Probably they do, for it is close to the headland bearing the same name—the name which it seems to have borne many centuries ago, when people still believed in the myth of Brutus the Trojan, and called all this coast the Totnes shore. That name is now borne by the town alone, but "the original Totnes (the projecting ness or headland—A.S. *totten*, to project) may have been either Berry Head or Prawle . . . the name of the entire district became at last confined to its chief town—probably of British foundation."\* Prawle Point was one of the headlands always made for by mariners of old navigating the English Channel, and a commentator to Adam of Bremen's "*Historia Ecclesiastica*," writing some eight hundred years ago, speaks of vessels touching there on their voyage from Denmark to the Holy Land.† At this very day it is an important signal station, and the constant succession of bright coloured flags signalling passing ships gives a gay air to the common sloping gently to the cliffs that in the days when the cape was the "*Prol in Anglia*" of the commentator was unmarked by anything save perhaps a beacon mound.

The gneiss rocks of this exposed headland are very

\* *Vide* R. J. King's "Devonshire," *Quarterly Review*, April, 1859.

† *Ibid.*



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much weathered, especially on the western side, where they would be swept by the prevalent wind nine months out of the twelve. At its base wind and waves between them have eaten completely through a large rock, and formed an arch I dare say some twenty feet in height. The coast is an awful one for wrecks. Close at hand, just inside Gammon Head, is the spot where two Spanish galleons went ashore, and within living memory doubloons have been picked up—treasure trove after more than two centuries. Off the Prawle H.M.S. *Crocodile* met her doom, and at our feet as we descend the path beneath the coast-guard station lie—or lay, for it is some time since I was there—the timbers of a Norwegian barque. Of other and greater disasters—for on this occasion no lives were lost—we shall hear more as we approach Start Point, the scene of some recent and terrible catastrophes.

Sheltered by the headland is the little haven where the fishermen of Prawle keep their boats. It is only a tiny opening in the rocks, and will hold but a few craft, but the fishermen make the most of it, and have even utilised an adjacent rock, converting the hollows into places for storing their fish and gear.

The coastguard path runs through an undercliff which slopes to the foreshore from a line of rugged tors, the promontories, as it were, of the country above. Beneath these eminences, which are clad with fern and underwood, the path winds onward—for a long distance only a few feet above the rocky beach. Here and there it passes through an isolated patch of wheat or stony croft of potatoes, detached portions, I suppose, of some invisible farm, which, if the soil above is as bad as that below, must pay its way with difficulty. The horses on these coast farms have a bad time of it. I watched one poor beast attempting to haul a load of grain up a field at an angle of something like forty-five degrees, and it was not without a vast amount

of straining and pulling and pushing that horse and wagon at last crawled up out of sight over the brow of the hill.

The low cliff stretches onward with little variation either in height or shape. There are no coves till you get to Lannacombe, or Lannacombe *Mill*, as it is generally called, in memory of the mill which was once there. Here there is a pleasant beach of sand over which a little stream empties itself into the sea. This Lannacombe is not without its story. During the French war a privateer's crew landed and sacked the mill, taking even the bed from beneath the miller's wife and her recently born infant. But they were not ruined. While the Frenchmen were busy over their work of destruction, the miller, trusting to chance, flung a bag containing his money out of the window with very little hope of ever seeing it again. But lo! when the morning dawned and the enemy had departed, it was found hanging in the branches of an elder tree.

Soon the pathway begins to climb and reaches high ground under Pear Tree Point. Where the pear tree is I do not know. It is certainly not to be seen. This headland rises into a rocky peak under which the path makes a bold sweep, in more than one place dangerously near the edge of the cliffs. In front is a deep rocky cove, the further arm of which is the stern promontory of the Start. Now, this Start is a very Janus face, for on the side facing the east and north are smooth grassy slopes—as peaceful a looking cape as you will find. But on this western and southern side what a difference! From where we stand it looks like nothing so much as a rocky skeleton, barely covered with a skin of turf. From vertebræ of rocky pinnacles, seamed and fissured by the storms of ages, ribs of rocks protruding through the grass descend to the cliffs in lines curiously regular. The jagged tors—for such, indeed, they are—give to the headland a strangely weird appearance, increased by the eerie cries of the kestrels and other wild

birds which haunt their recesses, while now and again a raven flits with hoarse croak across to the ivy-hung crags of Pear Tree Point. As for the gulls, they are in millions, and on outlying rocks stands the dark figure of the cormorant watching for his finny prey, or drying his outspread pinions in the sun. On a shadowy day there is an aspect of gloom about the whole scene, the only cheerful thing being the white lighthouse.

On this autumn afternoon it is all pleasant enough. The sun, getting low, slants across the turf between the two headlands, and there is scarcely sound or motion in the sapphire sea below. So still it is that a Government surveying steamer lies tranquilly close into the beetling cliffs that, even on this day, rise gloomy to the turf above. Yet it is easy enough to see at what short notice this cliff-encircled bay may become a cauldron of foam, and the grim Blackstone off the point, now gently lapped by the waters, prove fatal to the stoutest ship that ever left an English port. And there are few along this coast who will soon forget that awful March Monday when so many poor souls went down beneath the frenzied billows off the Start.

It was half-past five on the evening of the 9th of March, 1891, when the wife of one of the lighthouse keepers saw a large steamer loom through the driving snowstorm and pass close under the point. Hardly had she reached another window commanding a wider view when with an awful crash the vessel struck the rocks. Before the lighthouse men could render any assistance she parted in two, and foundered apparently with all on board. I say apparently, for what with the snow, and waves running mountains high, little could be distinguished. Two boats, however, were launched under the ship's lee, and the whole company left the doomed vessel. Twenty-two were in the lifeboat, and

four, including the captain, in a smaller boat. This captain was a hero. Listen to what Anders Johnsen says at the inquest. At the last moment Johnsen found himself without a life belt. "I told the captain I had not got one, and he said, 'Take mine,' which I did." That is all; but surely the generous deed of this noble man who perished a few minutes later is deserving of more recognition than that accorded by a bald newspaper paragraph.

The boats pulled away from the rock, but in the gathering darkness became separated, and the smaller was never seen again. The crew of the lifeboat made for Lannacombe Cove, but fearing the surf, which was tremendous, struggled out to sea again, and did not adventure another landing until Horseley Cove was reached beneath Prawle coastguard station. But the hearts of the poor fellows again failed them, for it was now quite dark! Once more they turned seaward, only to meet a towering wave which capsized the craft. The Mag ledge smashed her to atoms, and only five reached the shore, one so injured that he had to be borne by the others, two of whom remained by him, while another staggered off in search of help. The coastguard, after attending to his wants, went in search of his comrades, but many hours elapsed before they discovered them—the injured man stone dead, the other two in a furze brake in almost the same condition. The fifth man, who got ashore unknown to his companions, perished in the snow, which concealed his body for a whole fortnight. Poor fellow! he had had a hard struggle to reach the inhospitable shore. His legs were terribly lacerated by the sharp slate rocks, and his garments nearly torn from his body.

Such is the story of the wreck of the *Marana*—a story that for many a year will be told by every fisherman's fireside, from Hallsands to Prawle—a tragedy more than any other

marking the blizzard of March, 1891. I have told it shortly for, alas! other lives were lost within hail of the Start Light that terrible evening.

Before day dawned another ship had gone to her destruction. About midnight, and while the coast was being searched for survivors of the *Marana*, the head keeper at the lighthouse was startled by seeing lights right under the headland. So furious was the howling of the storm that no sound could be heard, and no cry of distress came up to guide the brave keepers as, with hand clasped in hand to prevent being blown into the sea, they felt their way down the cliff. And when they reached the seething waters there was nothing—not a sign—to show where a few minutes before a gallant ship had floated. The mad breakers rushed up the cliffs or were torn to shreds by the blast, and, exhausted and covered with snow, the would-be rescuers reached the turf above. So terrible was the wind that the very coastguard could scarcely see—"Their eyes seemed as if they were being pricked with needles, and they were bloodshot next morning as the result of the strain they had been put to."

Day broke, and on a sea-washed rock the watchers descried a human form, and hastened to his assistance. But exhausted with his vigil, numb from exposure, the poor fellow was unable to grasp the rope thrown to him, and, slipping down the rock, was swept away.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### START BAY.

Hallsands and Beesands—A Long Seine—The Dogs of Start Bay—More Wrecks—Torcross—Slapton Lea—Slapton Village—The Bryans—Poole and the Hawkins'—Street—Blackpool—Stoke Fleming—Gallants' Bower—Dartmouth Harbour—Dartmouth Castle.

THE path now crosses the ridge connecting the Start with the mainland, and as we reach the summit, and pause to take breath, we understand that *Steort*, the Anglo-Saxon word for "tail," was no inappropriate name for this vertebrate promontory running so sharply into the sea. There is another tail-shaped point in Somerset (though this is low and flat) which bears the same name, and here the old pronunciation still exists, or nearly so, and people call it Steart Point.\* But you must not tell sailors of Anglo-Saxon origins *et id genus omne*; for them the Start *is* the Start—the point from which vessels sailing down Channel *start* on their voyages. So be it; let them keep to their opinion, we will keep to ours.

Meanwhile we are on the summit of the ridge and can almost throw a pebble from either hand into the water north and south. In the latter direction we see little, for Pear Tree Point blocks the way, but northward there is a wonderful view of the great bay, with its semi-circle of strand stretching nearly to Dartmouth Harbour. Hundreds of feet below, built on the very beach under a low cliff where the high, steep hills which here descend

\* Pronounced *Stee-ert*.



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to the sea begin to break away, is a line of cottages whitewashed and thatched. This is Hallsands. It is the kind of place that one hardly expects to find nowadays, except in the pages of some child's picture book, a primitive place with neither hotel, store (co-operative or otherwise), or, as far as I could see, even post-office. Certainly the telegraph comes nowhere near it—a matter here for intense regret, as there can be no doubt that the absence of telegraphic communication along this dangerous coast has been the direct cause of the loss of many lives. This is no place for a sermon on national negligence; but I may perhaps ask when *will* England wake up to the knowledge that her want of coast communication is a crying disgrace, and that annually—nay, monthly—valuable lives are lost and valuable property cast away while legislators wrangle over measures the consideration of which might well be postponed to a more convenient season? How many more ships will be allowed to founder off the Start, off Morte, off half a dozen other headlands in Devon alone, before some one arises to plead successfully the cause of our sailors, and “teach our senators wisdom?”\*

Rows of fishing boats line the beach, and piles of net are everywhere, for the inhabitants of Hallsands are fisher folk. So are they who dwell at Beesands, a very similar hamlet about a mile further on. And the fishing operations are worth watching. I have done some seine fishing myself, and looked on at a great deal more; but I have never seen such a lengthy performance as the “seining” at these villages. Hundreds of fathoms of rope are employed, and half an hour to one *haul* only—taking no account of the casting of the net—is nothing of a job. After watching

\* Coastwise communication has now been established. “Out of evil has come forth good.” But it needed the blizzard of 1891 to bring the authorities to the point.

the yards and yards of rope that the two lines of men dragged slowly from the sea, and seeing no signs of the net, I inquired the length of line used. "Eight lengths of sixty fathom apiece one end and eleven lengths of sixty fathom 'tother," said a son of Zebedee, tranquilly, as though a mile or two of rope were nothing at all. And so by degrees this two thousand odd yards of line comes in hand over hand and is piled in great coils on the beach, until suddenly the surface of the water breaks into bubbles and splashes like a great kettle boiling over, and the seine appears inclosing a struggling mass of fish, the cause of all this commotion. Well out of reach of the tide are they drawn, and then in the most businesslike manner arranged and sorted, "the good placed in vessels—*i.e.*, hampers—and the bad cast away." Then comes the auction, which to those who dwell in cities will seem a curious affair indeed. No auctioneer is here with ivory mallet and rostrum. An old sailor stoops and takes up a handful of the gravelly sand, and the person who is bidding when the last grain filters through his fingers becomes the purchaser.

These villages are noted for a peculiar breed of dog, a kind of retriever with a cross of Newfoundland. They are large and strong, and so useful to the fishing folk that without them there would in rough weather be much delay in beaching the boats. For the dog of these villages knows no fear, and is as careless of the surf as the gulls themselves. He will swim out to the boat that cannot get near enough to the beach for a line to be cast to those waiting, take the line in his teeth, and carry it ashore. Then, with little or no prompting, so well is he trained, he will keep his eye on the "ways"—that is, the pieces of wood over which the boats are drawn up the steep bank of shingle—dashing into the breakers after any bit that may get adrift. And more than once or twice they have saved

people from drowning. "But with all their good qualities," writes Mr. Fox, "we are bound to confess they sometimes manifest a propensity towards cheating the Revenue!" Here is an instance related by the dog's master. "One night I was out with the dog when it was dark, and presently he began sniffing about and then dashed off into the waves and soon returned lugging along something which he dropped and began digging a pit in order to bury it in the sand. It proved to be a tub of brandy, which I brought home and was very glad of, as my missus had been ordered to take brandy." Another time a dog brought in two casks, and again "he brought in quite a lot of them." But now the coastguard are too much for the smugglers, whether biped or quadruped.

Situated as they are, we are tempted to wonder why these villages have not long ago been washed away by the sea; but the beach is steep, and though at high spring tides, with an easterly gale blowing into the bay, the breakers are almost at the door, they have never yet, as far as I know, got inside it. Still, neither village could have appeared a very safe place of residence in such a storm as that to which we just now alluded. On that occasion, and almost at the same time that the *Marana* and *Dryad* were wrecked, two smaller vessels drove ashore, one under Hallsands Cliffs, and another close to Beesands. Of the crew of the first vessel, two were saved by the fishermen, who at the peril of their lives climbed down the cliffs and hauled their perishing brethren ashore with life lines. In the case of the wreck off Beesands, only one of the five hands was rescued. This was the captain, who came ashore in a life buoy, to which he had succeeded in attaching a line from the shore. His crew, upon leaving the rigging to follow his example, were one by one swept away by the seas which flew high over the doomed vessel.

So ends this record of destruction. Within three miles

of distance, within seven hours of time, a steamship of 1692 tons, a barque of over a thousand, and two schooners went to pieces, while fifty-two human beings were hurried into eternity. The blizzard will be remembered by all of us in Devonshire, but by none so well as the people about the Start. Nor is the constable who had charge of the inquest likely to forget his share in these disasters. Leaving South Pool on Wednesday morning, when the drifts were deep, he did not reach Newton, the residence of the coroner (though only twenty miles distant as the crow flies) till late on Friday night.

From Hallsands the cliffs become low and soon cease altogether, and we look up a shallow valley into the country inland. Between Beesands and Torcross is a mere, or lea as they call it about here, lately formed by the landlord of the Torcross Hotel for fishing purposes. In shape it is an irregular triangle, and looks natural enough with its two little islands and more or less sedgy covering. Like the larger and better known Slapton Lea, it is separated from the salt water but by the beach. A short distance beyond it the slate cliffs again commence, a path leading over them to Torcross, which the pedestrian is strongly recommended to follow, as the beach round the point is about the most fatiguing piece of walking possible. At every step you sink in over your ankles, and there is really nothing to be gained by keeping along the margin of the sea except a peep through the gorge-like entrance of a deep quarry, now abandoned to the ivy and other greenery with which the crags are fast becoming covered.

Torcross is Hallsands and Beesands combined with an element of modernisation. There is a big hotel; there are lodging houses. A coach visits it twice a day, and imports the young man in blazers and the young woman in short skirts. The principal attractions are the fishing and, in the winter, shooting in Slapton Lea. This fresh-water lake,

which is about two miles long, is curious. Its formation is due to a bank of shingle washed up by the sea, which dams back the streams descending from the country inland. Its breadth and depth vary, but it nowhere exceeds half a mile, and the northern end is a mere streak. Its total area is 237 acres, and "for the mere sport of fishing—that is, of catching fish easily and in abundance—there is not such another place as the Lea in the West." The fish are principally pike, perch, and roach.

Slapton Lea is so full of reeds that the owner is said to make as much as two hundred pounds a year by the sale of them. They are used for thatching. The upper end beyond Slapton Bridge is almost a solid mass; indeed, it is difficult to distinguish the water at all—it is a sea of reeds. Along the top of the bank dividing the lea from the sea runs the Dartmouth road. The lea is only a few feet below it on the one hand, and the sea, at high water, approaches very near it on the other. There is a story that the waves, driven before an easterly gale, once washed right over it into the lea, killing all the fish. I can well believe it, having seen the sea very near it myself. Enormous breakers thundered upon the shingle, and the spray flying across hid the distant line of road in a white mist. I was on the top of the Dartmouth coach at the time, and the guard coming forward spread over us waterproof aprons. He made no remark, and was evidently continually in the habit of thus protecting the passengers from the briny rain.

From this shingle bank came the first seakale eaten in England. Here it grows (or grew) wild, and might never have been cultivated had it not occurred to a gardener living at Stoke Fleming to transplant some of the roots. They did well, and after awhile some were sent as presents to his master's friends at Bath. This was more than a hundred years ago, when Bath was at its zenith.

The new vegetable tickled the fashionable palate, the fame of seakale spread, and it was soon selling in Exeter Market at half-a-crown a root.\*

The country at the back of the lea is rich and well cultivated, and pleasantly broken up into hill and dale. Indeed, there are few coach drives more enjoyable than that to Kingsbridge through Stokenham, where the Torcross people go to church, and on through the long village of Chillington to Frogmore, at the head of one of the numerous creeks that give—on the map—such an octopus appearance to the Salcombe estuary. The cottages of these villages are half hidden in myrtle and fuchsia, which flourish unprotected all the year round. There is Charlton, too, with its massive church tower, on the hill above Boycombe Bridge, which crosses another creek, and hereabouts you will have a splendid view of the estuary, with the serrated profile of "The Bolt" in the distance. Kingsbridge is round the next bend climbing the hillside at the very top of the estuary—a pleasant, sunny little town that will now become better known as it has recently been brought into closer communication with the world by the railway. But of Kingsbridge I have written before; besides, it is scarcely a coast town.

To return to the coast. A wearisome plod of nearly two miles along the straight, level road on the top of the bank of shingle brings us to Slapton Bridge. Crossing this, we leave both sea and mere behind, and pass over the hill into the village. Slapton lies in a thoroughly Devonshire valley in the midst of green meadows and orchards. Part of the village fills the bottom; part straggles up a warm slope. On this slope is the church, an interesting building, with a tower that is said to be Norman. It is capped by a spire which, though comparatively modern, looks quite as

\* Murray.

ancient as the tower. A Perpendicular window on the western side rather takes away from the Norman character of this tower, though of course it may have been a later insertion. The chancel, of the Decorated period, is divided from the nave by an oaken screen extending right across the church. In the vestry are preserved two quaint little wooden figures of a gentleman and lady dressed in the style affected during the reign of James the First. They are supposed to be the effigies of Henry and Katherine Dotin, or Dottin, whose brass, formerly in the church, is preserved in the parish chest in a chamber over the north door. The church is under restoration, but funds are not easily raised, and the aisles are still disfigured by "horse-boxes."

In private grounds overlooking the village rises a tall tower, almost the only relic of the chantry built by Sir Guy de Bryan, who bore the standard of King Edward the Third at the battle of Crécy. He lived at Poole, now a farmhouse half a mile away near the Totnes road. The top course of stones has gone, but a pointed turret still remains. Close by is another turret, small and of octagonal shape, abutting on some hybrid ecclesiastical buildings, built on to the house, and once in the occupation of the "nuns" of Father Ignatius. These ladies some years since migrated to Llanthony Abbey, the religious house built by the Father among the Monmouthshire mountains.

Slapton is another of the places where you may get white ale. The Tower Inn claims to have the best brew, not only in Slapton, but in all South Devon. Unfortunately, I have hitherto had no opportunity of sampling it. The jolly landlady, hearing that I was "bound east," recommended me to try the Trafalgar Inn at Dartmouth. I did so, but was again "out of season." There would be no brewing, they said, till the weather

became cool. This was in September. Another house approved by her was the Plymouth Inn at Kingsbridge.

I am told that the taste for white ale is dying out, the rising generation preferring beer. Perhaps this is hardly to be regretted, considering what a potent beverage it is. But there is, at any rate, one reason for wishing it a longer existence. The lees are used in baking instead of barm, and the bread of Slapton is the best I ever tasted. Barm at Slapton is only used to make ginger beer. Failing white ale, the Slapton people use the lees of potatoes. It would be well if some bakers that we wot of would bake such honest stuff instead of the wretched adulterated rubbish that most of us have to eat. Even these out-of-the-world villages can teach us something.

I have spoken of Poole, once the home of the Bryans. Here at a much later date lived Sir John Hawkins, one of the most renowned of the "sea-dogs" of Devon. There is nothing now to remind us of the old house—the farm buildings are quite modern and much like any other; only in the old walled garden may there linger memories of the "spacious days of Elizabeth." The villagers say that until quite recently an alley, or the remnants of it, led from the house to the church, and that down it Sir John walked with his bride over a velvet carpet. If this be true, the carpet must have been half a mile long.

Returning to Slapton Bridge, we again take up our walk coastwise. This road is dreadfully monotonous, and we are glad to reach the end of the lea, and find ourselves once more at the foot of cliffs which now stretch eastward as far as the eye can reach. They are still of slate, not the stern mica slate and chlorite of the Start, but of grauwacke, and here and there of a pale greyish green colour. Nowhere this side of Dartmouth are they of great height, the ground breaking away at some distance inland and descending in steep cultivated slopes to the edge of the precipices. The



road rises at so steep a gradient that it is seldom used except by pedestrians, vehicles taking the new and longer "loop."

Pausing for breath at the top of the ascent—in summer time about the hottest piece of road in South Devon—we look back over the whole of Start Bay, with its seven-mile border of shingle, its interminable road, and the three old-world hamlets on the very edge of the breakers. The now distant promontory, with its glistening white lighthouse, presents a very different aspect to what it did yesterday when we first came upon it as we rounded Pear Tree Point. No one would believe that those smooth green slopes had at their back the rugged cliffs and ribs of rock into which wind and wave have beaten the southern surface.

A little beyond the top of the hill is Street, a village which has nothing but its position to recommend it, being dusty, dingy, and altogether uninteresting. Then the road descends again, winding down the slopes to Blackpool. Blackpool is delightful. It lies at the mouth of a deep wooded valley, watered by a brook half hidden by a lush growth of water plants. There is no village, but above the trees rises the smoke of one or two picturesque cottages, while in front, separated from the beach by some level meadows, stands an equally picturesque country house. So small is the cove that the grounds of this house border it throughout the greater part of its extent, coming between the beach and road. Access to the water, however, is gained by a roadway passing through a plantation where shrubs which would not have a chance in more northern latitudes flourish luxuriantly.\*

This sequestered bay was the scene of the landing of the

\* In this bay is a submerged forest which, at low water of spring tides, is occasionally visible. As often as not, however, it is covered with sand. In 1869 it was examined by Mr. Pengelly, who discovered a number of trunks and branches imbedded in a "brownish-drab clay," but no indications of tools, weapons, or animal remains.

French in 1404. The French having pretty well sacked Plymouth a year or two before, the Dartmouth men joined them in reprisals, and made a descent upon the coast of France, in which the Frenchmen suffered so severely that they in their turn determined upon revenge. Under the command of Du Chastel they made for Dartmouth, but unable to enter the harbour, probably owing to the presence of an iron chain stretched across its mouth, they landed at Blackpool. But the countryside rose *en masse*, even the women arming themselves, and attacked the invaders with such vigour that four hundred were slain and two hundred taken prisoners, including Du Chastel, three barons, and twenty knights. But this was not the end. A month later Du Chastel's brother returned; Dartmouth, taken by surprise, was mercilessly pillaged, and for two months the triumphant Frenchmen sailed up and down the coast working out their vengeance.

Just over the top of the next hill is Stoke Fleming, a large village, of which the church tower has been a prominent landmark ever since we reached the Start. Although high above the sea, the greater part of the village is in a hollow—a prosperous-looking place, and well sheltered from the gales. The church probably dates from the thirteenth century, and, though very much pulled about at a later period, has some Decorated features. The tower, for instance, is late Perpendicular, and Perpendicular arches have been built on to the piers in the nave. In the floor near the lectern are brasses to John and Eleanor Corp, dated 1361 and 1391. They are said to be the oldest in the county. Another brass, dated 1614, is to the memory of Elias Newercomin.

A lane leads past a farm and into a footpath which emerges upon the cliff-slopes and follows the coast line for some distance. Suddenly there is a turn, and we look down a steep hillside upon a rift in the cliffs. So

steep. is the declivity that we can sweep from stem to stern the decks of a steamer passing slowly under the rocky shore, no longer up or down the open sea, but northwards—*inland*. It is the mouth of the Dart, and the steamer is entering Dartmouth Harbour.

Not that we can see Dartmouth Harbour, yet or even Dartmouth town. Gallants' Bower—the hill top rising to the left—hides both; we can only see Kingswear Castle—a square grey tower set upon the rocks almost at the waters' edge. But Gallants' Bower is little above our level, though if it were the summit of a mountain it would still be necessary to climb to it. For it commands the best view of Dartmouth.

Gallants' Bower is crowned by the ruins of an earthwork thrown up by Fairfax in the Civil War. Scarcely to be distinguished from it are the lines of an earlier fortification, dating perhaps from British or Danish days. Both are more or less covered with brushwood and trees, from the branches of which depend clusters of wild clematis and convolvulus. The slopes of the hill are wooded, too, and among the trees paths meander in every direction—paths greatly favoured by the youths and maidens of Dartmouth wrapped no doubt very often in the mazy glamour of love's young dream.

And, in spite of the wise conjectures of the learned, I fancy that lovemaking *has* a deal to do with the name of this hill. Here no doubt the gallants of the "good old times" brought their Roses and Mirandas and Amelias, and here, equally without doubt, they enjoyed themselves quite as much as do their descendants of to-day. There is another spot with a name very similar—we have already visited it—*Gallantry Bower*, on the cliff-top near Clovelly—where probably the same old story was told by the Carys and Coffins and other gay young blades of the northern shore. Why, then, go out of the way to imagine that this

Gallants' Bower was cut—like the maze at Winchester—“in imitation of those mosaic pavements laid down in cathedrals on which people were permitted to compound for the performance of an actual pilgrimage to the Holy Land?” Provided the “consideration money” were not too high, Gallants' Bower must have been a very pleasant place indeed for such a “pilgrimage.” Is it not rather far fetched, too, to trace the name back to the times of the Romans, and to look upon Gallants' Bower as a training ground for youthful athletes? That it was, as some think, a place for Midsummer sports appears a theory far more reasonable. But I like my lovemaking idea better than any.

The harbour lies three hundred feet below; Dartmouth on the one hand, Kingswear on the other, both built up steep slopes. Dartmouth is the larger and without doubt the more picturesque; in fact, Kingswear, although said to be the older town, is not at all interesting, but dull—not to say dingy. You can see the windings of the estuary nearly to Greenway where Sir Humphrey Gilbert lived, and where, some say, his half-brother Raleigh smoked his first pipe. The house—not the old house, *that* is gone—stands above the steep timbered promontory on the eastern bank of the river.

Right beneath us the steamer we saw just now has dropped anchor, and hoisted the quarantine flag to her fore peak in token that she has come from foreign lands. The tide swings her across the channel, and the narrow strip of water is blocked by her long black hull. One yacht glides past under her bows, another under her stern, the captain of both, we may be sure, wondering audibly, and in language none too polite, how much longer the port doctor is going to keep her blocking the “fairway.” Further up round the corner, where juts out the pretty house of the Royal Dart Yacht Club, its scrap of a garden

bright with lobelia and geranium, are more yachts, from the ocean-going steamer of six or seven hundred tons to the tiny cutter of twenty. "Raters" with canvas enough, one would think, to lift them out of the water altogether, scud up and down and in and out, practising for one of the many matches that are the delight of amphibious Dartmouth. I know these raters, and if you had been out in a new (and untried) one round the buoy there beyond the harbour mouth you would know them, too. I had no idea that I was so active until a puff laid us on our beam ends—if there *are* any beam ends to these craft. The way I climbed up to windward was remarkable.

But besides the yachts there are other vessels not so graceful. Moored in mid-stream are divers hulks, the carcasses of ships that have sailed their last voyage. These have been converted into colliers. For Dartmouth, besides being a great yachting place, is not without importance commercially, and it is not the trim steam yacht only that wants coal. It is the port of call of many "tramps," and of the steamers of one or two passenger lines, though the most important—the Castle to South Africa—knows it no more. And off the northern end of the town lie the naval training ships *Britannia* and *Hindustan*, connected with each other by a covered gangway. In their dismasted condition they are not picturesque, and, though cleaner, look scarcely more attractive than the colliers.

At the seaward base of the hill, on a rocky point, stands Dartmouth Castle. There are two towers, one round, and originally built about the time of Henry the Seventh; the other, of later date, is square. As neither would be much good in modern warfare, a battery has been built close by. Adjoining is the old church of St. Petrox. In Turner's picture "Dartmouth Castle" the tower of this church has a short spire, but this is now gone. The church contains little of interest except a so-called "Saxon" font and three

old brasses—one to John Roope, dated 1609; another to Barbara Plumleigh, dated 1610; a third to Mrs. Dorothy Rous, dated 1617. John Roope is represented in full dress. Below him may be read these lines :

'Twas not a winded nor a withered face  
Nor long gray hares nor dimness in the eyes  
Nor feble limbs nor uncoth trembling pace  
Presadg'd his death that here intombd lies  
His time was come his maker was not bounde  
To let him live till all theis marks were founde  
His time was come that tyme he did imbrace  
With sense and feeling with a joyfull harte  
As his best passage to a better place  
Where all his cares are ended and his smarte  
This roope was blest that trusted in God alone  
He lives twoe lives where others live but one.

At the back of church and castle, a few yards up the hill, some fragments of ivy-covered ruin mark the site of an old manor house, the property of the Southcote family. The whole group of castle, church, and ruin has a quaint semi-foreign look. It is best seen from the water. From an artistic point of view the appearance of the round tower is rather marred by an armadillo-like covering of slate.

On the opposite shore, immediately beneath the grounds of Brookhill, are the ruins of another castle—a mere fragment. This castle commanded a place in the rocks where the great chain was made fast for securing the harbour mouth. This chain stretched across the Jawbones, as the channel is called, to the round tower, where it was apparently wound up and tautened, a large roller having been discovered in the wall of that building over which the chain is supposed to have been drawn. At what date this chain was first brought into use I cannot say, but it is mentioned in a record of 1481, where Edward the Fourth covenants with the townsfolk of Dartmouth to pay them an annual sum of £30 if they will erect a new tower and

stretch a chain across the mouth of the harbour. This tower (if ever built) has disappeared, and perhaps the present round tower was erected instead of it. The latter, as I said just now, dates from the reign of Henry the Seventh, and was the result of an agreement between that monarch and the men of Dartmouth, containing terms very similar to those entered into by his predecessor. Henry, however, notwithstanding his well-known parsimony, offers more—viz., £40—and perhaps the extra £10 a year touched the hearts—or the pockets—of the men of Dartmouth. For their £40 the corporation have to build “a strong and mighty tower and bulwark, with lime and stone, furnish the same with guns, artillery and ordnance and find a chain in length and strength sufficient.”\*

As for Kingswear Castle, which stands as low as or perhaps even lower than that of Dartmouth, its lot is one of peace. Its owner, Mr. Seale-Hayne, M.P., has made it into an occasional residence, though happily without interfering with its picturesque appearance. It is grey and weather-beaten, as it well may be, for in an easterly gale it is drenched with spray from foundation to battlement.

\* Browne Willis’s “*Notitia Parliamentaria*.”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DARTMOUTH AND BRIXHAM.

Dartmouth—St. Saviour's Church—John Hawley—Townstall—History of Dartmouth — Kingswear — Down Head — Sharpham Point — Berry Head—Old Forts—Landing of William of Orange—Varwell and his Adventure—Napoleon's Visit—"Resurrection Bob"—Brixham Quay and "Brixham Lords."

A ROAD, following the winding of the shore, leads from Dartmouth Castle to Dartmouth town. After passing at the back of the grounds of Gunfield, it turns suddenly westward in order to get round Warfleet Creek. The view here is charming, the harbour being seen through a screen of foliage. Leaving the brewery behind, we find ourselves in a long, narrow street which descends into the centre of the town, presently forking. The upper part of the fork takes us into Higher Smith Street. Here are one or two of those old houses with projecting gables and richly carved fronts for which Dartmouth is—or, rather, was—nearly as famous as Chester. The lower branch ends upon the open space facing the quay and steamboat pier. Here the old houses have been removed, but some of the modern ones erected in their place are very fair efforts at perpetuating the characteristics of the ancient tenements. Close by is the much quoted Butter Walk, a row of houses with most elaborately carved brackets and woodwork, built by one Hayman for himself and his five daughters in 1635. They are supported by granite pillars, thus making a kind of piazza or covered way. At right angles to the Butter Walk is Fosse-street, where there are more picturesque





DARTMOUTH.

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houses. The southern end of this street is closed by the tower of St. Saviour's Church, which we will now visit.

The architecture of this church, which was built late in the fourteenth century, is in nowise remarkable. Externally the building is plain enough, and grimed with the smoke of the surrounding houses. On the south door is some extraordinary ironwork representing a tree in full leaf, the trunk apparently running through the bodies of lions, though, as the work is in one piece, it is difficult to say whether the lions are meant to be impaled or not. The date is 1631. But the interior of the church is most interesting. It contains a wonderfully sculptured stone pulpit, and an oak screen delicately carved and stretching from wall to wall. Both are painted. On the top of the screen is a modern rood standing between figures of the Virgin and the Magdalen.

The altar is as gorgeous as either pulpit or screen. It is painted and gilded profusely, and the panels are divided by saintly figures. In a light building all this colouring would have a gaudy effect, but St. Saviour's is so dark that the richness of the tints is hardly noticeable.

As a rule galleries disfigure a church. Here, however, the panels are so filled with emblazoned escutcheons that one almost forgets that the structure itself is scarcely a thing of beauty. Over it, at the extreme west end of the church, is a large painting by Brockedon of Christ raising the Widow's Son. At the opposite end, in the chancel, are some curious brasses, one to John Hawley and his two wives, the other to Gilbert Staplehill, Mayor of Dartmouth at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Hawley brasses are the earlier—indeed, they are among the earliest in Devonshire. Joan Hawley died in 1394, and Alice in 1403, while John survived till 1408. It will be remarked that he is represented clasping the hand of his first wife only; perhaps he did not get on quite so well with the second?

This worthy was the most celebrated among the fighting Dartmouth merchants of the Middle Ages. He is said to have equipped a fleet at his own expense wherewith to harry the French. At any rate, he "tooke 34 shippes laden with wyne to the summe of fifteen hundred tunnes." Gilbert Staplehill does not appear to have been so famous. However, he has a longer epitaph, and a couplet more sensible because less eulogistic than those generally engraved to the memory of prominent characters. This is what he says:

Behold thy selfe by mee  
I was as thou art now  
And thou in tyme shalt be  
Even Dust as I am now  
So doth this figure paynt to thee  
The Forme and state of eche degree.

A mile distant, on the top of the high hill behind the town, the tower of St. Clement's or Townstall Church stands out against the sky. This is the mother church of Dartmouth, but, being at such a distance from the town, has been less favoured than St. Saviour's. All that I know about it is what I have derived from guide books—which is nothing—for, after a grilling climb of half an hour up one of the worst hills in Devonshire, I found it locked. Nor was the key to be had at the farm adjoining—the only house near. Where was the sexton? Nobody knew—they did not even know where he lived. Where was the vicarage? Down in the town. I looked down that terrible hill upon the housetops three hundred feet below, and—gave it up. The vicar might be out, and it really was too hot to hunt up "Joe" of whereabouts unknown. But I really think that, considering the position of Townstall Church, arrangements might be made for leaving the key at the farm.

And so I can tell you nothing about Townstall, except that there are some geometrical features showing that the church dates back to somewhere about the thirteenth

century. And it was once turned into a *fort*. When Fairfax descended on Dartmouth, Townstall Church was garrisoned by the Cavaliers. A hundred men held the church, while ten guns were mounted on the tower. It took some trouble to dislodge these defenders, but, as usual, Fairfax had the best of it.

But I have begun the history of Dartmouth at the wrong end. For a history the old seaport has, nearly as stirring if not so varied as that of Plymouth. Its mariners were noted for courage and daring, and from Dartmouth Chaucer took his "ship man."

For aught I know he was of Dertemuthe.

It was to Dartmouth that in 1049 Swain, son of the great Earl Godwin, brought Earl Beorn for execution, and here he buried him in the church, showing that there was a church even in those days. From it in 1099 William Rufus sailed to Normandy.\* From it, too, in 1190 sailed the Crusaders; and about this time commenced that feud with France which was kept alive for so many years. During the absence of the Crusaders the town was burned by the French, notwithstanding the fact that English and French were fighting shoulder to shoulder in Palestine. In 1338—how many fights there were between, I know not—the Dartmouth men captured five French ships, and of the crews only nine men ever saw France again. Four years later it received its charter of incorporation as Clifton-Dartmouth-Hardness, the name by which it is still known in official records, and soon after sent thirty-one ships to the siege of Calais. In 1377 the French again reduced the town to ashes. The combined descent of Plymouth and Dartmouth upon the seaboard of France in 1403, Du Chastel's failure at vengeance in the ensuing year, and his brother's too successful attack later, I have referred to already.

\* "The Early History of Dartmouth." By P. Q. Karkeek. T. D. A., xii., p. 572

In the wars of the Roses, Dartmouth appears to have taken the side of the Lancastrians. At any rate it permitted the Earl of Warwick and the Duke of Clarence to use it as the port of embarkation when they sailed to France for reinforcements.

Dartmouth men and Dartmouth vessels were well represented in the fleet that hung on the flanks of the Armada as it sailed up the Channel, down which it was never to return. And by-and-by, when the great carrack *Madre di Dios* was captured on her voyage home from the West Indies, Dartmouth was the port to which she was brought, and great was the spoil. Before the authorities in far-away London could prevent it, a great part of the merchandise with which she was freighted had become scattered throughout the neighbourhood. "Most of the country houses near Dartmouth," says Murray, "had been enriched with treasures from the carrack—hangings, plate, or inlaid woods." Truly the Dartmouth men were not very particular. The law of *meum* and *tuum*, I am afraid, sometimes met with little respect in the "good old times." Piracy was little accounted of in the days of Elizabeth.

In the Civil War the town, which had thrown in its lot with the Parliament, was taken by Prince Maurice. The King's party held it for three years; then it fell before the indomitable Fairfax.

Such is an outline of the history of the picturesque old seaport. I have gone into it at greater length elsewhere, and have also made some allusion to other worthies besides John Hawley. Of the Gilberts, of Raleigh, and of John Davis "the navigator," who dwelt at Sandridge, a house overlooking the broad reach of the river above Dittisham, I have also said enough, nor has Newcomen been forgotten, the greatest of our early engineers.\* His house has unfortunately been pulled down, but portions of it may still

\* "The Rivers of Devon."

be seen at Newcomen Cottage on Ridge Hill, where some of the carved work decorating the front has been utilised in a very skilful manner. Some plaster work from the same place, showing the Three Children before Nebuchadnezzar, may be seen at Brookhill, near Kingswear, where also, among other relics brought from Sir Humphrey Gilbert's house at Greenway, is shown a portion of the mantelpiece under which Sir Walter Raleigh is supposed to have smoked his first pipe.

Crossing to Kingswear by the ferry steamer, we once more come upon the railway—the first time since we left Plymouth. No part of the Devonshire coast is more free from the inroads of the iron horse than the fifty miles lying between these two seaports. Nor, with one exception, do I suppose that the Great Western Railway Company ever will find it profitable to establish communication with this long stretch of seaboard. The one exception is Salcombe. For *that* place there is some chance, for a feeler has already been thrown out as far as Kingsbridge, and, as Salcombe shows some sign of growth, I take it upon myself to prophesy that, before another decade has passed, there will be a railway station at Salcombe. Ten years seems a long time, does it not? But things move slowly in South Devon. And not a few will regret when the railway does come, for the little town inside the Bolt is one of the few watering places in England free from the excursionist horde. But I am digressing.

There is little to see in Kingswear, nor is there much in the coast line between its castle and Froward Point that we have not already seen from the shore opposite. It is worth while, however, to follow the road and path past Brookhill to the very mouth of the bay, and, leaving the tall and very ugly landmark (for all the world like a factory chimney on four legs) on the hill top to the left, explore the pretty coves of Old Mill Bay, Padcombe Cove, and Ivy

Cove. Off the former lies the serrated mass of another Mewstone, a large and bold rock, and the smaller crags called the Cat Stone and the East Black Stone, while beyond is the grassy promontory of Down Head. From this there is a good view of the coast as far as Sharpham Point, which conceals the bolder cape of Berry Head, towards which we shall now direct our steps. It is a lonely walk, for, with the exception of the coastguard station at Man Sands, not a building, except a ruined mine on Durl Head, greets the eye, and it is parlous tiring—up and down the whole way. There can be no doubt that this rather bare piece of coast is best seen—as I have seen it more than once or twice—from the sea. For the colouring is very rich, the cliffs being composed of limestone and slate, with here and there a patch of red sandstone. The tints about Durl Head are most delicate, ranging from steel grey to the palest pink—the latter colour due, I believe, to peroxide of iron.

From Down Head the path descends to an open bay fringed by the line of Scabbacombe Sands—a pleasant place for a bathe. Then there is another climb, for, although the cliffs themselves are of no height, the hills are, until another descent takes us to the white row of coastguard cottages at Man Sands. Hence to Durl Head there is no path at all, though probably no one will object to the very harmless trespassing over the rough fields at the back of Sharpham Point (where there is a raised beach), and along the curve of Mudstone Bay, a cove with a sandy beach hemmed in between Sharpham Point and Durl Head. From Durl Head we look down upon the Cod Rocks—crags bright with orange lichen—while between them and the land is yet another Mewstone. And so, the cliffs now becoming more precipitous, we ramble, or, rather, scramble, over Oxley Head, and there, close at hand, are the ruined forts that crown the long, straight grey wall of Berry Head.

The summit of Berry Head is a good wide table-land



covered with turf when it is not covered with furze brake. Open and breezy though it be, it is rather a melancholy spot, for it is laden with ruins—the ruins of forts erected at the time of the threatened French invasion. These buildings succeeded earlier fortifications, dating from Roman times, or perhaps earlier still. Of these no traces remain. A misty tradition states that Berry Head was the spot where Vespasian and Titus landed. This is impossible, as the cliffs are much too precipitous. There is no doubt, however, that there was Roman masonry in the old ramparts, and there have also been “finds” of Roman coins. And one of the many caves in the limestone (known as Ash Hole) appears to have been used by the Roman soldiers as a rough and ready cemetery. Human remains, bronze, and pottery have been found there, buried beneath the bones of the sheep, ox, and rabbit, the refuse of the camp formed there during the military operations early in the century. For it is said that in wet weather our soldiers used this Roman charnel house as a *cooking pit*!

The fortifications at the extremity of the Head are less ruinous than those of the older battery and much more extensive, covering quite three times the area. One or two of the buildings are still kept in repair, and the one near the gate is a refreshment house much affected by the people of Torquay and Brixham, for whom, on a summer day, Berry Head is a happy hunting ground. And, indeed, the bracing air of this wind-swept bluff must be like a draught of champagne after the relaxing atmosphere of “the queen of watering places,” not to speak of the view. For, although Sharpham Point cuts off the prospect towards Dartmouth, the panorama northwards has few rivals anywhere. Let us seat ourselves upon the turf by the signal station and look about us. So abruptly does the rock wall sink to the waves below, that if you are suicidally inclined you may actually sit upon the edge, and look

straight down upon the breakers. But a seat safer and more dignified will be found a few paces further inland, whence it is still possible to see the rocks and watch the long line of Brixham trawlers creeping past two hundred feet below, their red sails contrasting strongly with the pearly grey of the limestone.

Torbay is beneath us, and Torquay with its villa-covered heights directly opposite, distant exactly four miles. Paignton, lying in the middle of the bay, is half hidden by the low red sandstone bluff of Roundham Head. At the back a rich and fertile country, broken up into hill and dale and full of soft greens and blues and greys, sweeps westward till the horizon is bounded by the heights of Dartmoor, most conspicuous being the twin rocks of Hey Tor.

This is the panorama beneath our feet, but we can see more than this. Beyond Hope's Nose, the promontory forming the northern horn of the bay, the eye ranges along the glowing cliffs of Teignmouth and Dawlish—the houses of the latter looking in the distance like little white blocks—to Exmouth sloping upwards from the estuary of the Exe, and, should the day be clear, you will see the tall sandstone cliffs of Sidmouth, the white chalk of Beer Head, and even, low down on the horizon, the higher end of Portland Bill, looking at this great distance (it is forty-six miles as the crow flies) really like an island. There is no view on the South Coast more extensive, none more beautiful, for, though there be little grandeur, there is a wealth of colour such as no other part of the English Channel can show. As Charles Kingsley says, "Though it can boast of neither mountain peak nor dark fiord, and would seem tame enough in the eyes of a western Scot or Irishman, yet Torbay surely has a soft beauty of its own. The rounded hills slope gently to the sea, spotted with squares of emerald grass, and rich red fallow fields, and parks full of stately timber trees. Long lines of tall elms,

just flashing green in the spring hedges, run down to the very water's edge, their boughs unwarped by any blast; and here and there apple orchards are just bursting into flower in the soft sunshine, and narrow strips of water-meadow line the glens, where the red cattle are already lounging knee-deep in rich grass, within two yards of the rocky pebble beach."\*

This great bay, large enough to hold half a dozen navies, is frequently used as a harbour of refuge by captains unable or unwilling to face the south-westerly gales, and the grey walls of Berry Head sometimes look down upon a considerable number of merchantmen, and occasionally upon one or two of those useful but certainly not ornamental floating forts belonging to Her Majesty. But the largest fleet that ever sailed into Torbay had no thought of avoiding the elements. It came charged with a stern resolve; it came at the call of the English people. Never will the old town of Brixham see such another sight as that of the autumn day two centuries ago when the Liberator first set foot on Devon soil—as a guest, it is true, but not at kingly invitation. On the 4th of November, 1688, the anxious watchers thankfully saw the waters of the Channel dark with moving sails as William, Prince of Orange, attended by his magnificent escort of more than three hundred and fifty ships, headed for Torbay. Other watchers descried the coming armament and were thankful, too, but from how different a motive! On the tower of Torre Abbey stood certain Catholics scanning the horizon for the French fleet that was to help King James. These mistook the ships of Dutch William for those of French Louis, and, full of joy, prepared a banquet for their friends. It must have been as gall and wormwood when a few hours later they saw the sturdy Hollanders falling upon their choice viands. There was no Gallic politeness. "Instead of vostre serviture, Monsieur,"

\* Glaucus.

says one who had been on board the fleet, they were entertained with "Yeen, mynhere, can you Dutch spraken?"\*

Nor was this the only serio-comic occurrence in connection with the landing of William of Orange. "If I am welcome," said the Prince as the boat approached the beach, "come and carry me on shore!" A little man nearly as broad as he was long—no uncommon characteristic of Brixham men (I can call to mind a worthy native of the fisher town with whom I have voyaged who is just such another)—waded in and bore William to the shore. It is said that the welcome of the inhabitants took a poetical form, and that they addressed their visitor thus:

And please your Majesty King William  
You be welcome to Brixham quay  
To eat buckhorn and drink bohea  
Along with we.

And please your Majesty King William.

In an antiquarian magazine I have seen a query as to the genuineness of this remarkable metrical outburst. The Brixham folk do not look poetical now—no, not one of them. And as there was then no "quay," while tea was an article only indulged in by the wealthy, it is scarcely probable that a colony consisting of a few fishermen could even have heard of it. Why, a tax of 8*d.* per gallon was payable on every quart brewed! So I am afraid that King William's welcome must have taken some other form, though that it was a hospitable one goes without saying.

The little man—by name Varwell—who had carried the Prince on shore, rode bareheaded before him to Newton and Exeter, and William, pleased with his enthusiasm, invited him to Court, giving him a note as passport. When the time came, Varwell journeyed to London full of importance at the favour shown him. Unfortunately, however, he boasted so much, that some sharpers conceived the plan

\* "A Third Collection of Papers relating to the present Juncture of Affairs in England, 1689." In Colonel Clifford Lloyd's Library, Torquay.

of profiting by the simplicity of the poor Brixham man. They made him drunk, and stole his passport, with which one of them presented himself at Court and was duly rewarded. When Varwell attempted to see the King he was naturally sent about his business, and retired sadly to Brixham. It seems rather strange that William should have failed to detect the imposture, for the face and figure of his stout little Christopher must have been familiar enough to him. Indeed, another version of the story says that Varwell *did* see him, and received £100, with which he built himself a house in the fishing town.\* I must say I hope that this latter version is the true one; and if the King paid twice over probably he could afford it.

The ship in which William sailed on his peaceful invasion—an English-built brig—was, until the last few years, still in existence. I cannot give the exact date of her breaking up, because the book from which I gather the information† has none. But ten years before that book was printed—and it is a recent work—she was afloat and doing duty as a trader. William christened her the *Princess Mary* in honour of his wife, and when he became King converted her into a yacht, and as such she passed to his sister-in-law, Queen Anne. King George handed her over to his courtiers, and she eventually became the property of some London merchants, who re-christened her the *Betsy Cairns*. What's in a name? Not much, perhaps; but can romance cling to such a name as Betsy? Alas! poor *Princess Mary*! Now she is a West Indiaman, and anon, having once more changed hands, has become a *collier*. O, what a grievous falling off was there! Notwithstanding, the sailors, it is said, loved her, "and had a superstitious feeling that while the *Betsy Cairns* kept afloat Protestantism

\* Trans. Dev. Assoc., vol. xii. "The Prince of Orange at Brixham." By T. W. Windeatt.

† Cockrem's "Torquay."

would remain in the ascendancy." Her final owner was Mr. G. W. Wilson, of South Shields, and it was while on a voyage from that port to Hamburg that the good old ship met with her last storm. Cast on the Black Middens, off Tynemouth, she went to pieces, but not before the crew had been saved by the lifeboat. Fragments of the wreck "fetched large sums as relics of an object which, though inanimate, had taken, so to speak, a personal share in the building up of the British Constitution."

The next Royal visitor to Torbay was that fallen despot Napoleon. For several days at the end of July and the beginning of August, 1815, the *Bellerophon* lay off Brixham, in the very spot occupied so long before by the armament of the Prince of Orange, with the most illustrious—shall we not say notorious?—personage of modern days a captive on board. And now the bay presents the appearance of a gigantic regatta. In the stateliest of yachts, in the merest cockleshell of a pleasure boat, the inquisitive throng to catch a glimpse of "Boney." And "Boney" did not say them nay, but was frequently seen in his uniform of the Imperial Guard pacing the deck of the big warship. Yet Torbay, which he very much admired, must have brought him sad memories. It was, he said, like Porto Ferrajo in Elba.

He was not the last of his name who visited Torbay. In 1871 the "man of Sedan" came to Torquay accompanied by the luckless Prince Imperial. "It would almost seem," says Mr. Karkeek, "as if Torbay was destined to be associated with the ill luck of the Bonaparte family, for it will be remembered that while under the orders and in charge of an officer whose home was on the shores of Torbay the Prince met his fate in Zululand."

One of the caves in the limestone of Berry Head is supposed to communicate with the Laywell, a spring near Upper Brixham, once intermittent, and supposed locally to be affected by the rise and fall of the tide. This spring has

recently been destroyed by a road contractor, and the cave is now only celebrated as having been once used by a band of smugglers commanded by one Bob Elliott, a daring scamp who gave the coastguard more trouble than any man this side of the Start. A humorous Devonshire writer gives the following story, which he says he heard from the lips of Bob's grandson: One week, when Bob was laid up with the gout, his crew arrived with half a dozen kegs of brandy for which they had been unable to find room in the cavern. So the kegs were concealed in Bob's cottage. But somehow the coastguard got wind of what had happened, and the cottage was visited. But Bob was dead. He had died during the night, it was said, and the officer out of respect withdrew his men without making any search at all. The coffin—a very large one, someone remarked, but then Bob was a big man—was duly brought, and soon a mournful procession left the cottage. But

'Twas his *spirit* they bore,  
Whilst, to keep from a roar,  
In a kerchief Bob buried his nose.

That night three coastguards met a coffin on the Totnes road, accompanied by one who bore a strange resemblance to the buried Bob. To the eyes of the terrified officers this phantom glared

Like one whom they'd rather not name,  
Whilst the nag cocked his tail  
Like a harpooned whale,  
And snorted a crimson flame.

Panic-stricken the men fled, and brought the tale to their commander. But that gentleman was no fool, and, keeping his own counsel, paid a nocturnal visit to the dead man's cottage. Here, under the shadow of the wall, amid roars of laughter, he heard Master Bob tell the story of his ruse. To the dismay of the smugglers, the officer walked in upon them, but, beyond giving them a sound rating, let them off scot free. Perhaps he was unwilling to make public how

easily the King's men had been duped. But ever after the hero of the adventure was known as "Resurrection Bob."

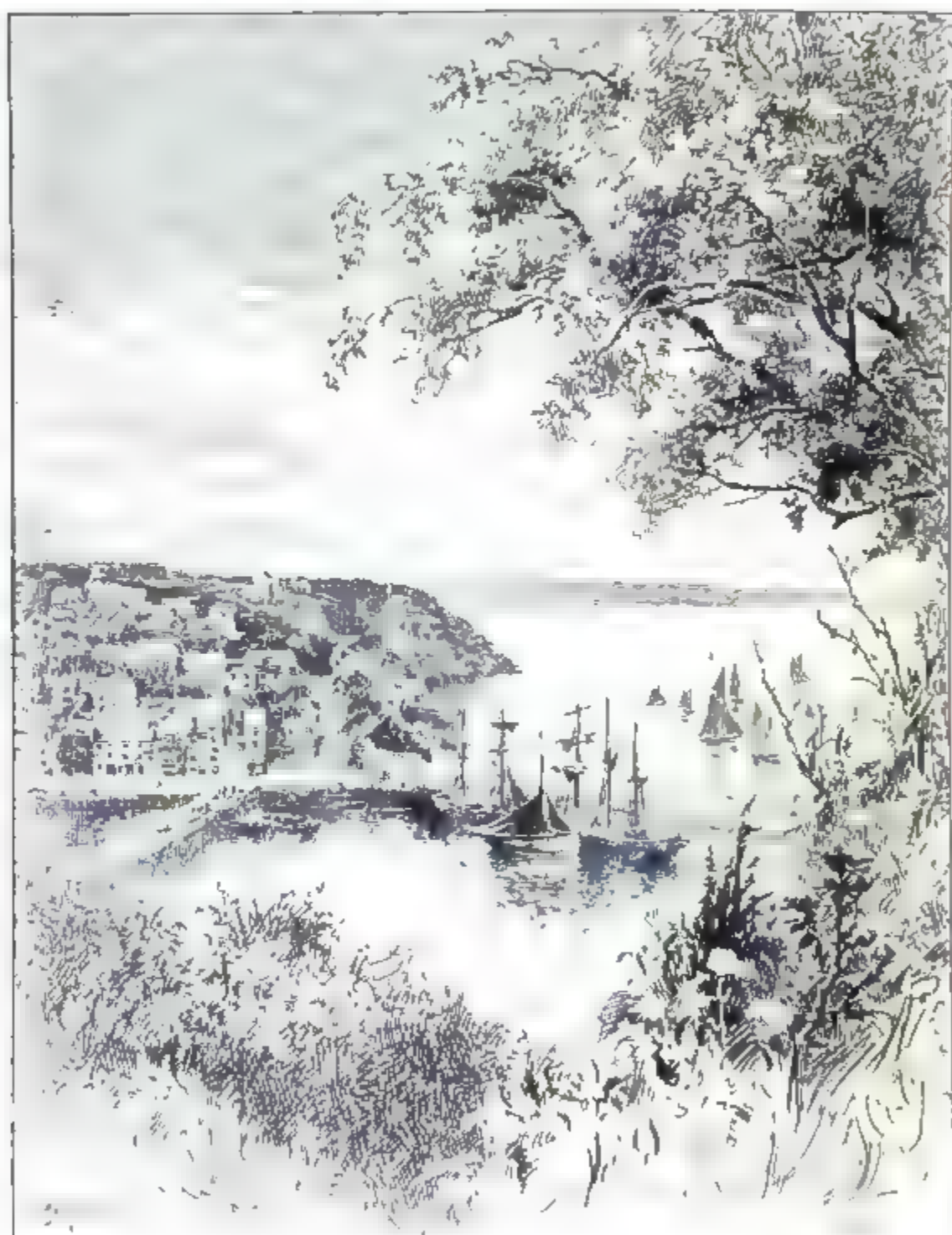
Peering over the northern edge of the precipice, we notice that quarrymen are at work below, and that a vessel is moored right alongside—so deep is the water—ready to take in the limestone. These quarries are somewhat destroying the picturesqueness of this side of Berry Head, but so vast is the supply that it will be many years before any impression is made that will be perceptible from a distance. Just beyond the quarry, where the perpendicular wall of cliff comes to an end, a path winds downwards through a sort of undercliff towards Brixham Quay. It passes the mouth of a cavern, which, though extending too short a distance into the rock to be worth exploring, is made a medium for advertising the superior attractions of another cavern at Windmill Hill, near Upper Brixham, and, if the advertiser is to be believed, "Phillips' Cavern" is well worth seeing. It was discovered about thirty-seven years ago, and so interesting were the deposits, that greater efforts were made to explore the more famous Kent's Cavern, near Torquay. In this Brixham cavern the explorers discovered flint implements, and the remains of the cave lion, hyæna, and other animals. Attached to the stalagmite floor was a reindeer antler, significant as showing that in bygone ages our climate must have been much colder than now—in fact, Arctic. For myself I cannot say that I love these damp, dismal places, and, as Windmill Hill Cavern is out of our line of route, we will take the truth of the lessee's hand-bills for granted, and follow the road to Brixham Quay.

Soon we come in sight of the unfinished Breakwater—unfinished for the usual reason, lack of funds. It is scarcely credible that the large sum of £14,000 should have been spent on the 1100ft. of masonry that shelters from the easterly gales such of the craft as cannot find room in the



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**BRIXHAM QUAY.**

overcrowded harbour. As we turn the corner we come suddenly upon the harbour itself, lying between twenty and thirty feet below us, for the road rises a little as it enters the town, though presently dropping again to the back of the Quay. Here, in front of a row of tall buff-coloured houses, stands a marble statue of William of Orange, one foot upon a rock, representing him, I suppose, as he landed. His left hand is laid upon his heart—if he had one—his head is thrown back, and his whole attitude is a “speaking” one, and no doubt illustrates his form and bearing when in the act of making his famous Declaration. At the pierhead is preserved the rock itself—or, rather, stone—upon which he first stepped, and which is said to bear his footprint. As, however, this stone is set in the base of a granite obelisk (which also does duty as a lamp-post, typifying, perchance, the light which this champion of Protestantism is supposed to have shed abroad), we shall have no means of deciding on the truth or falsity of the legend. The inscription is short and to the point: “On this stone, and near this spot, William, Prince of Orange, first set foot on his landing in England, 5th of November, 1688.” Close by there is a tablet recording the visit of another William—William, Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William IV. The offering presented to him by the Brixham people was a curious one—a fragment chipped from the stone of his greater predecessor.

The whole of one side of the harbour is given up to the fishing industry—*the* industry, as all the world knows, of Brixham. The Quay is covered with sheds which become very lively indeed of an evening when the boats are expected, and livelier still when they come in and discharge their glittering wares by the ton for purchase by the dealers whose wagons wait hard by. Many find their way to the railway station, 200ft. overhead, which smells of fish day and night—indeed, more than half of it is reserved for

fish business only. I have noticed boxes labelled "Billingsgate" and "Manchester" among the piles awaiting the train, so the trade is evidently no local one.

Those who have never seen trawling, the method of fishing chiefly practised by the Brixham men, may like to know how it is done. Well, the trawl is a great bag net, the mouth kept open by a long pole or "beam." This is lowered overboard and dragged along the bottom of the sea, scooping up everything of a movable nature that comes within its maw. Whiting is the fish caught in the greatest quantity about Torbay, but of course many other kinds are swept in as well. The fish most in request is the sole, nor is the reputation of the Torbay sole any new thing. I have already related how Quin, the actor, travelled all the way to Bath in order that he might taste these fresh. On awakening next morning, he was much disappointed at hearing that, owing to a storm, none were to be had, and, it is said, went to sleep again, remarking that he might as well stay in bed till the morrow, when perhaps there would be a supply !

The cost of the nets is very heavy. Sometimes the trawl becomes entangled in wreckage or an abandoned anchor, and is drawn up with a great rent, or has to be cut away altogether. There are between two and three hundred sloops belonging to the port with an average burthen of 45 tons. They are strong, well-built vessels, as indeed they need be, for they are out in all weathers, and sometimes go immense distances.

The merry boats of Brixham  
Go out to search the seas—  
A fleet all staunch and sturdy,  
Who love a swinging breeze ;  
And off the woods of Devon,  
Or silvery cliffs of Wales,  
Is seen on summer evenings  
The light upon their sails.

Those who “ dearly love a lord ” will have every chance, not only of seeing, but of hobnobbing with one of those delightful creatures at Brixham Quay. They are as plentiful as blackberries in a Devonshire lane. What though they smoke Cavendish and drink small beer—they are lords for all that. It came about in this wise : A long while ago—I do not quite know when—a portion of the manor was for sale. Twelve Brixham men bought it. Whether each could have entailed his share had he so willed, I do not venture to say ; probably he would not if he could, for, with regard to the disposition of property, your sailor has very free views indeed. At any rate, they did not, and, in process of time, every one of those twelve shares have been divided and subdivided *ad infinitum*, and the bit of manor purchased so long ago is now the inheritance of half the fishermen of Brixham. And thus half the fishermen of Brixham are “ Brixham lords.”

The streets of Dartmouth are steep enough ; those of Brixham Quay are steeper. The houses cling to the hill-side one above the other at such an angle that many can only be approached by steps. As for the odours, they are inexpressible. One expects a good deal of fishiness about a fishing town, but there are other smells about Brixham Quay. Sanitary science is evidently at a discount. Further up the valley, where the lower part of the town joins the upper, we get beyond this unfragrant atmosphere. But Upper Brixham is not at all interesting ; the attraction lies in Brixham Quay and Brixham trawlers.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ABOUT TORBAY.

Paignton—The Palace, the Church, and the Kirkhams—Torquay—A Lotus Land—Torre Abbey—De Bruière's Revenge—Chapel on Torre Hill—Climate of Torquay—Daddy's Hole and its Legend—Meadfoot—Ilsham Grange—Kent's Cavern—Anstis Cove—Anecdote of Bishop Philpotts.

Green swelling hills of Devon, foliage-traced,  
With cliffs romantic, round bright waters close ;  
Here blushes early, lingers late, the rose ;  
The myrtle here surrounds the leafy waste.

C. STRONG.

AT low tide I believe you can walk from Brixham to Paignton by the shore, and, when you have passed the mile of cliff and rocky foreshore beyond the quay, the going looks pleasant enough. And there are some pretty bays washed out of the low red banks—cliffs they can scarcely be called—that bound the meadows most of the way, such as Broadsands, Saltern Cove, and Goodrington Sands. Shallow valleys, sometimes rather marshy, and therefore of an intense green, open on to the sea here and there ; behind, the land rises in graceful undulations well sprinkled with timber. From Broadsands the railway hugs the shore, so closely sometimes that you look right down upon the beach, and get flying glimpses of Berry Head and the little fleet of trawlers lying at their moorings outside the pale cloud of smoke that hangs over the valley where Brixham climbs upward from its historic quay.

Paignton is so completely hidden behind Roundham Head that you are in it almost before you know where you are.

The head shelters a harbour which keeps alive the small amount of coasting trade with which Paignton is favoured. For Paignton is no seaport. It is, and always has been since first it ceased to be a mere village, a watering place. And, notwithstanding the superior charms of Torquay, it grows yearly in favour. For it has what Torquay has not—a magnificent beach. In fact, this beach is the principal attraction. For, to my mind, Paignton itself is hardly an interesting town. The lower part is built on a dead level, and there is an air of sameness about the place which is not lost sight of till one reaches the long uphill street of the old village, the best part of a mile from the sea.

Indeed, it seems to me that Paignton has been spoilt in the laying out. The sloping hills in the background would have afforded fine sites for crescents and terraces, while the level near the shore was surely worthy of something more handsome than the very ordinary villas that now border the roads. However, to make up, perhaps, in some sort for this, it has a good promenade, not to speak of a smart iron pier from which there is a very fine view of Torbay.

Paignton belonged to the see of Exeter, and near the church are the ruins of an episcopal palace. A tower dating from the fourteenth century and a bit of wall are all that remain. The last bishop who resided here is said to have been Miles Coverdale, and tradition has it that in this tower he translated the Scriptures; but I am afraid that this tradition, like a good many others, is supported by evidence of very insufficient nature.

The Parish Church, built of red conglomerate, is a large and airy building with a massive tower. Part of it is as old or older than the palace, for, although the style is, in the main, Perpendicular, the western doorway is Norman—a very interesting specimen with varied mouldings. But the great feature of the church is the elaborate stone screen in the Kirkham Chantry. This beautiful piece of work

consists of a central arch flanked on each side by canopies beneath each of which lie a pair of figures, male and female, members of the family by whom the chantry was founded. Below are statuettes of the twelve Apostles. They are all headless, and the credit for this mutilation is, of course, laid at the door of the Roundheads. The larger figures have also suffered, and a good deal of the delicate tabernacle work has been broken. Nor did the iconoclasts spare the pulpit, which in shape bears some resemblance to the one in St. Saviour's Church at Dartmouth; in substance, however, it is different, being of oak. In the churchyard are the steps and part of the shaft of an ancient cross.

In Kirkham-street stands an old house—one of the few old houses left—which is worth a visit. It was once the residence of these Kirkhams. There is little about the exterior to denote its ancient state—indeed, it is not much more than a large cottage. But there are still traces of former greatness within. Beyond the ogee-headed oak doorway is a stone arch; in the principal room, formerly doubtless the hall, a stone mantelpiece with key mouldings, and, set deep in the wall, a piscina, or water drain. The roof of this piscina is divided by ribs, and the ribs meet in a grotesque head with the tongue lolling from the mouth.

The two miles of road that link Paignton with Torquay are hot and dusty, and we rejoice to hear that there is a little steamer running between Paignton Pier and Torquay Harbour. On this we will embark, for, from its deck, we shall get a far better view of Torquay than from the highway. At once it opens out before us, its wooded heights dotted with villas or lined with terraces. Broken cliffs overhung with foliage rise above the water—a deep rich red—until just beyond the Strand the limestone begins again.

In a few minutes the steamer reaches Lord Haldon's pier, within which quite a fleet of yachts and gay pleasure



craft dance on the ripples. Close by, to the right, is a sloping cliff pierced by a natural arch, facetiously termed London Bridge. Nor is this the only name reminding us of the far-away smoky City. For the roadway facing the harbour, lined with hotels and shops, is the *Strand*, a wide, open thoroughfare, very different to the narrow, noisy street that extends from Temple Bar to Charing Cross.

One visitor, indeed, finds a resemblance in kind as well as in name. "Imagine," he says, "portions of 'Paddingtonia,' detachments of shops from Piccadilly and Regent Street, and a few churches and chapels, migrated to the warm wooded slope of a high Devonshire hill looking forth on the sea, and you have Torquay." The principal street runs up a valley, and on each side, scattered over—not one hill—but over as many hills as Imperial Rome, scores—nay, hundreds—of villas in every style of architecture gleam through the foliage. None of them are anything but modern, for Torquay did not exist at all at the beginning of the present century; there was only the little village of Torre. Torquay is almost of mushroom growth, and its 25,000 inhabitants have nearly all pitched their tents there within the last fifty years. Their lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places; bleakness at Torquay is unknown, and cold blasts pass it by. Neither the north or east or west winds can get at it satisfactorily, and the consequence is that the climate is mild to a degree. It is the very place for idlers—and idlers abound. Look at those young gentlemen there, strolling along the pier, or lolling on the seats—most of them loll—laughing at the hurrying—no Torquay man ever hurries—of the unconscious tourist bent on getting a place on board the *Duchess of Devonshire*. Most of them, indeed, have nothing better to do than indulge in this *dolce far niente*, for a town that is said to be in proportion to its population the wealthiest in England must have "a good

deal of the lotus-eater about many of its inhabitants." Methinks if I stayed long enough in this pleasant clime I should become a lotus-eater myself.

Having regard to the recent origin of the place, one does not expect to find in it much that is interesting from an antiquarian point of view. With the exception of the mother church of Tor Mohun, a Perpendicular building of no great interest, the churches are all modern—one of them, that of St. John, a striking example of Street's genius. But at the west end of the town are some ruins of more than passing interest, representing, as they do, the remains of a building which for centuries was almost the only one overlooking the waters of Torbay. These are the ruins of the Premonstratensian\* Abbey of Torre—a religious house founded by Lord de Bruière in 1196. They consist of a Decorated chapter-house (now roofless), a fourteenth century gateway, a refectory (till recently used as a Roman Catholic chapel), and the Grange, which, for a long time has done duty as stables to the more modern mansion. This Grange was formerly known as the Spanish Barn, because the crew of the *Capitana*, a warship of the Armada taken by Drake and handed over to the Brixham men, were here placed in durance vile. This building is as old as the thirteenth century.

The story of the founding of Torre Abbey is told in a poem by Thomas of Plymouth under the title "De Bruière's Revenge." In the days of Richard the Lion Heart lived Hugh de Bruière, who loved Lady Hester, of the house of Ilsham. Her he left to join the Crusaders, giving her a ring, while she gave her lover a rosary. A year went by, and then his rival, De Pomeroy, appeared with a story that De Bruière was no more. He had, he

\* So called from the Valley of Premontre, where the first abbey was built. The Premonstratensian was a branch of the Cistercian order; its founder St. Norbert, Bishop of Magdeburgh.

said, fallen in battle with the Saracen. So De Pomeroy offered to supply his place, nay, pressed his suit hard, and, after allowing another year to elapse, the faithless fair one wedded him. But on the night of the wedding a ship dropped anchor in Torbay, a boat was lowered, and a knight stepped into it. As they neared the shore he noticed a blaze of light at Ilsham, and on landing asked a fisherman what it meant. He was told of the wedding. Pomeroy, to whom he had intrusted a message to Lady Hester, had played him false. But his time was near. The next morning the body of the supplanter was found floating in the Dart, pierced by a dagger. This summary proceeding does not appear to have commended itself to the new-made bride, for she would have nothing to do with the murderer, and returned him his ring. Then De Bruière is struck with remorse, and, as a sort of expiation, builds Torre Abbey. Lady Hester pines away and dies, and is the first buried within the abbey precincts. Ultimately De Bruière takes the vows, and

For many a year beside the grave  
Where Lady Hester lay,  
A monk in prayer was often seen ;  
But all have passed away.  
There's little left of Ilsham Grange,  
'Tis gone—as all things must ;  
The abbey Hugh de Bruière built  
Has crumbled into dust.  
Yet as we stand amid the wreck,  
The sunbeams glancing through,  
We sigh at Lady Hester's fate  
And wonder—if 'twas true.

Quite so.

The grounds are, or were, haunted by the ghost of a Lady Cary, a somewhat frivolous dame it would appear, who enjoyed the pomps and vanities of this wicked world to excess. Occasionally she is seen driving down the avenue attired for a ball, and, on one occasion, two young women

actually had the consideration to stand aside to let the carriage pass ! They say that it was brilliantly lighted ; they observed the coachman on the box and the gaily dressed lady inside, but as the vehicle reached where they were standing it vanished.\*

The abbey probably owes its name to a rocky hill just above the present railway station of Torre. This *Torre* hill is crowned by a small Early English chapel dedicated to St. Michael and formerly belonging to the abbey. The old building has little or no history, but appears always to have been held in peculiar reverence by foreign sailors, who were wont to make a pilgrimage to the chapel soon after their arrival in port, and this custom was kept up till very recent times. This devout act was doubtless due to the veneration in which St. Michael has ever been held by mariners, as the numerous churches and chapels erected on islands or prominent heights near the seashore testify. Who has not heard of Mont St. Michael in Normandy, or of its less lofty counterpart in Cornwall ? And not long ago we passed Borough Island, once crowned by a chapel to the same saint, who also had a building dedicated to him on Drake's Island in Plymouth Sound. This chapel at Torre is very small, only a little over thirty-six feet in length, yet there are four arches, and each of different shape. The roof is of stone, covered with slate.

About the climate of Torquay I have little to say. To me it seems mild and enervating. Yet the medical men tell me that I am wrong—at any rate, as to the feeling of enervation, though they admit the mildness. They point out that the mean temperature only exceeds by two degrees that of the rest of England, and, by means of long and doubtless learned sentences, would persuade me that, if anything, it is rather bracing ! Being an ignorant nobody,

\* Trans. Dev. Assoc., vol. xi. "Collectanea Curiosa Devoniensa." By P. Q. Karkeek.

I cannot argue about the condensation caused by the temperature of the sea being less than the dew, and so forth. I only know how I feel—and that is lazy. Still it is a delightful place, and, with an average winter temperature of  $46^{\circ}$ , no wonder that it has a reputation among invalids. Not that the “season” is confined to the winter months; the summer brings its birds of passage, too. And if these birds find their nests rather warm, they can easily spend the day abroad, for the neighbourhood of Torquay is full of interest. You may bathe at Paignton or boat at Dartmouth, picnic at Anstis Cove, or archæologise at Berry Pomeroy or Compton Castle. And if you want a *real* bracing up, you can take train to Bovey Tracey and try what the air is like on the top of Hey Tor. It is fourteen hundred odd feet higher than Torbay, and I find it pretty strong. Maybe, however, the Torbay Esculapii will call it “enervating.”

It is time to start eastward again. Let us take the pleasant foliage-shaded road that leads up to the common above Meadfoot, to my mind one of the pleasantest spots about Torquay. But it has an extraordinary name—Daddy Hole Common. Daddy is said to be a *soubriquet* for the Ancient Enemy, and his “hole” is a fissure near the edge of the cliff, caused by a subsidence in the limestone. An ash tree or two sprout from the sides, and there is a plentiful supply of brushwood, some of which clings also to the face of the cliff, which is very broken and picturesque. On the landward side the common is fringed with thorn trees and shrubs, from which depend masses of “old man’s beard” and convolvulus.

The connection of Daddy Hole Plain with the Devil is shown in the following legend. A damsel—who was of course “proud and beautiful”—loved a knight—who was of course “valiant.” But unfortunately the knight loved another damsel, with the usual result—that the proud and beautiful one hated her successful rival with most

un-Christian hatred. One day she met on Daddy Hole Plain a distinguished stranger who promised her revenge if she would give herself to him. She pledged her word, and on the following evening her friend induced the knight and his lady love to come to the plain. Concealed among the bushes she awaited their arrival, and when a favourable opportunity presented itself stabbed them to the heart. Thereupon a fearful storm arose, and a thick pall of darkness descended blotting out everything save a steed snorting blue flames, bestridden by the stranger, who, calling on her to keep her vow, seized her in his arms, and they sank into the fissure among the usual accompaniments of brimstone and fire.

Meadfoot, as its name implies, is a green valley sloping down to a cove. It is, of course, scattered over with houses—what valley anywhere near Torquay the octopus is not?—but the foliage is so abundant that they are scarcely obtrusive. A road winds down to the shore, and forms an esplanade, defended from the waves by a massive wall of grey and black “marble.” A little way out to sea is the Shag Rock; beyond lie larger islets, the Thatcher Stone and Oar Stone with grassy summits—we saw them better just now from the common at our back. The peninsula at the end of the cove is Hope’s Nose, where, as well as on the Thatcher, there is a raised beach. And here I may mention that Torbay was not always covered by the sea. In past ages a forest waved where now is salt water, and Leland mentions that fishermen sometimes dredged up *antlers* as well as fish.

We will not continue our walk to the extremity of Hope’s Nose—by the way, is it not a corruption of *Ness*?—but take the road up the isthmus at its back which leads direct to Anstis Cove. In less than a mile we reach a steep lane coming down on the right beneath a rocky limestone hill, where the shade of trees is a welcome relief to the dust and

heat of the road below. This leads in a few minutes to Ilsham Grange, in the farmyard of which stands a quaint old building erected by the monks of Torre in the fifteenth century. In those days Ilsham Grange was the Abbey Farm, and it was found necessary for one of the brethren to reside on the spot to keep an eye over the labourers. This tall narrow building was the result.

As we approach it, the pigeons are circling about the granite bell turret, which, though much weathered, still stands on the gable end. There are three floors, the lowest of which is now used as a coal cellar. The first floor is reached by a flight of steps on the outside of the wall. Here was the chapel, a tiny room about twelve feet long and nine wide, with a window of two lights (under which stood the altar), a credence table (still *in situ*), and a small slit through which the monk in charge could watch the labourers below. Above was his living room, the position of the floor still marked by the joists. The floor itself has perished. We can see that it was lit by three small windows, and there are two more slits commanding the farmyard on both sides. Overhead is the open high-pitched roof.

On the opposite hillside, not more than a few hundred yards further up the valley, and on the left of the high road, is Kent's Cavern. And, if you go to Ilsham Grange, you should by all means pay a visit to Kent's Cavern—that cave of primeval man and beast, the discovery of whose remains so excited the scientific mind that the British Association sent a small army of *savants* to explore its mysteries. And there, after much digging, they found all sorts of things dear both to geologist and zoologist—the teeth and bones of the biped and of a great number of quadrupeds, some of a genus still existent, as well as those of a few that have become extinct altogether, such as the mammoth and Irish elk. Quantities of bones belonging to creatures that England has not seen for æons were also

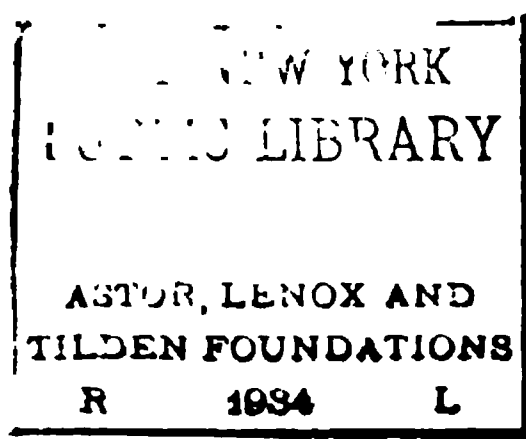
turned up—the remains of the elephant, hyæna, bear, cave lion, glutton, bison, and rhinoceros. And there were nearly four hundred flint tools, besides sundry weapons in bone, and again, bits of smelted copper, whetstones, amber beads, and a thousand and one other articles. In certain little recesses, fenced with a low wall, were knives of flint, fragments of rude pottery, and shells arranged as in the cromlechs of the Channel Islands. But I can say no more about these “finds” here—are they not written in the books of the Devonshire Association, and in other works devoted to these and kindred subjects?\*

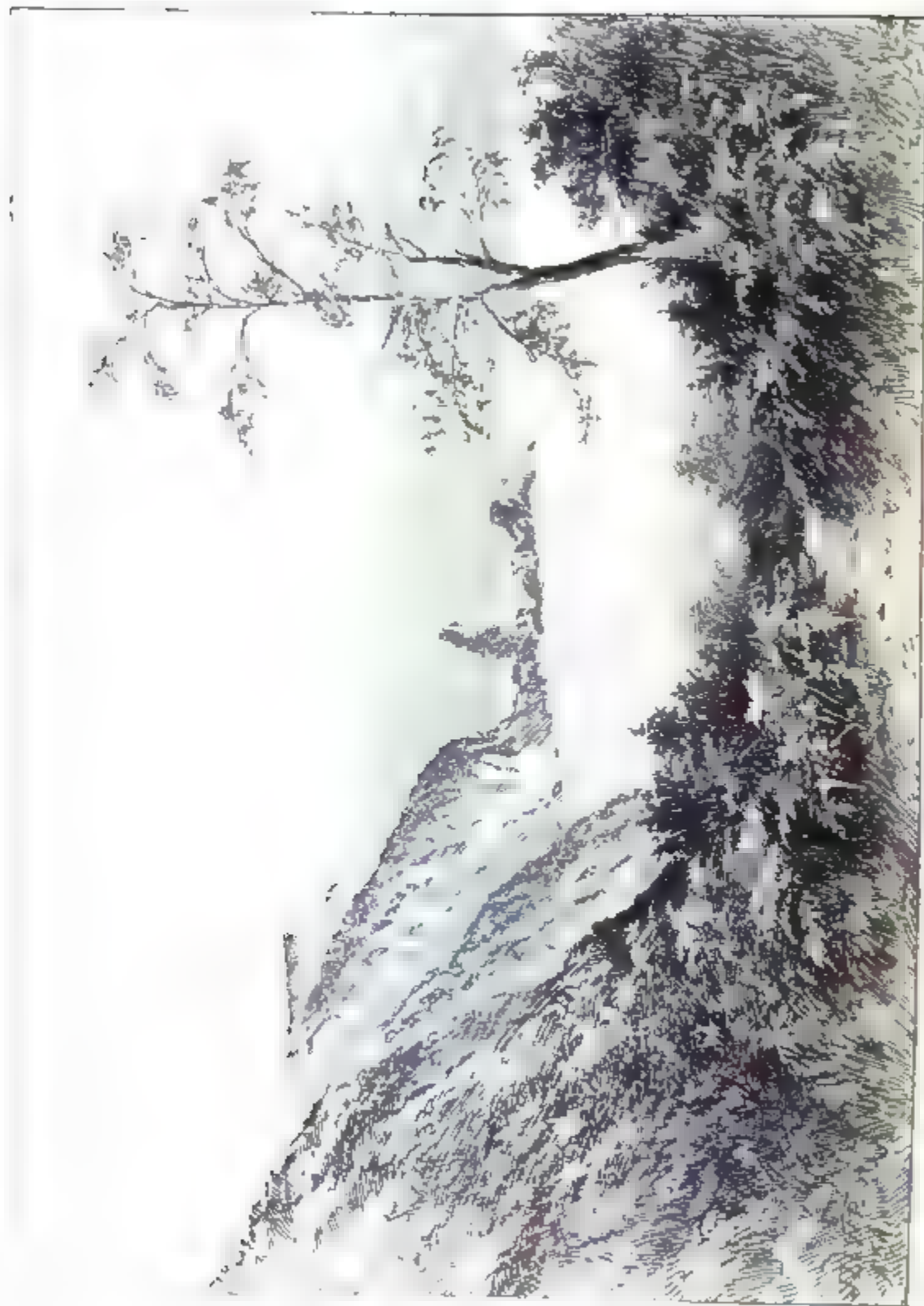
Beyond the curiosities—if so profane a term be allowed—there is nothing very imposing about the cavern itself. Perhaps I should say *caverns*, for there are really two, though they are connected. They burrow under the wooded hill for about two hundred yards, but are neither spacious nor lofty except in places, where the width may be sixty or seventy feet and the height twenty. There are, of course, plenty of stalactites, but stalagmite has vanished before the pickaxe and spade of the explorer. One cannot help feeling a little awe-struck when one reflects on the vast antiquity of this strange place where savage men dwelt two thousand years ago, scarcely less savage than the beasts of whose den he took possession, and who in their turn seem to have succeeded, or have been contemporaneous with, human occupants. For, in the lowest layer of all, three undoubted flint implements were found with the remains of the bear. How long ago *these* wild men lived who shall say?

Kent's Cavern is not without its legend. It is said to owe its name to one Sir Kenneth Kent, apparently an adherent of Edward the Second, “who escaped from the shrieks of the murdered king at Berkeley to find a

\* An excellent account abridged from a lecture by Mr. Pengelly, F.G.S., will be found in Ward and Baddeley's “Guide to South Devon and South Cornwall.”







ANSTIS COVE. FROM A SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR.

treacherous welcome from Sir Henry Lacey of Torre Abbey." \* The knight loved Lacey's daughter Serena, who warned him of her father's intentions, and, flying from the house, he took refuge in the cavern. Here the lady joined him, and they were to have taken flight as soon as an opportunity presented itself. But, although Serena was seen by some fishermen to enter the cave, no one ever saw either her or her lover leave it. Years went by before a man was found bold enough to explore the dim recesses. It is said that he found a skeleton clad in armour; by its side the ghostly form of a woman.

From Kent's Cavern it is but a few minutes' walk to Anstis Cove. It is impossible to make a mistake, for the road sweeps round the head of it, and you can see the sparkle of the water and the satin-like gleam of the limestone through the leaves. A combe slopes steeply to the shore, a lovely spot where paths wind in and out between the trees whose shadow tempers the heat of the morning sun. For Anstis Cove looks eastward, and, as the hills sweep round the back of it in a leafy amphitheatre, the sea air has not too much room to circulate, and on a summer's day it is decidedly warm. At the top of the combe stands a post supporting a great black board on which may be read the following effusion :

Picnics supplied with hot water and tea,  
At a nice little house down by the sea.  
Fresh crabs and lobsters every day  
Salmon-peel sometimes, red mullet and grey.  
The neatest of pleasure boats let out on hire,  
Fishing tackle as good as you could desire.  
Bathing-machines for ladies are kept  
With towels and gowns all quite correct.  
Thomas is the man who supplies everything,  
And also teaches young gentlemen to swim.

Having read this local outburst, we shall, I think, be justified in resting for awhile on a seat by the side of the "Bishop's

\* Walcott.

Walk," a pathway cut in the side of the southern hill, and running away towards Hope's Nose. This, to my mind, commands the finest view of the cove.

It is very small, not more than three hundred yards across, and even this short span is broken. For, about the middle, a mass of limestone has slid down from above and formed a vast heap of ruin. At the northern end the cliffs rise perpendicular to a height of quite two hundred feet, looking down upon a tall crag, behind which, alas! quarrymen are busily at work. Still, not yet is Anstis Cove given over to big hotel companies and the tender mercies of the speculative builder. And long may it remain undisturbed beneath its limestone walls — a turquoise set in pearl. Nought is there to disturb the loiterer but the merry shouts of some boating party, or the laughter of picnickers. And he may, perchance, get away even from these into a little dingle with trees and shrubs and wild clematis galore where the cove is only seen through a screen of foliage, and the voices of the merrymakers are mellowed by distance.

With the exception of Mr. Thomas's tea-house, where, if the above-quoted verse—done into *Latin* over the door—may be credited, you can get almost anything from hot water to a bathing machine, there are no buildings at Anstis Cove. Indeed, there is only one in sight. This is an Italian villa on the hillside above, where good Bishop Philpotts lived five-and-twenty years ago. There is rather an amusing story told about this villa. The Bishop was exceedingly proud of Bishopstowe, as the house was named, and a lady visitor, thinking to please him, rather gushed over the beauties of the scenery, remarking that "it was *so* like Switzerland." "Yes," said the Bishop, drily; "only *there* you have mountains and no sea, and *here* we have sea and no mountains."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### OVER THE RED CLIFFS.

Walls Hill—Babbacombe—The Story of an Attempted Execution—  
Oddicombe — Petit Tor — Watcombe Terra Cotta Works — The  
Teignmouth Road—Shaldon Bridge—Teignmouth—Its Churches—  
The Parson and Clerk Rocks—Dawlish—The Warren.

A SHORT, steep climb and we reach the top of Walls Hill, a level down. On both sides of the path the ground is full of cracks and fissures, the beginning of future landslips which will some day again alter the shape of the cove below. From the other side of the plateau we look down upon Babbacombe, and perhaps the richest piece of colouring in all Devonshire.

The down breaks away in rugged masses of limestone, not harsh and bare, but covered wherever there is the least soil with sward. Far below, embowered in elm, myrtle, and hydrangea, is the picturesque village, separated from the sea by a beach of white pebbles of which the further half, known as Oddicombe Sands, is backed by a deep red cliff. And, as if this were not colour enough, prodigal Nature has bounded the bay with a headland of grey marble seamed and weathered and broken, and descending to the waters, not in perpendicular walls, but in outline varied and broken. Vegetation fills every nook and cranny, and the grass, especially as seen against the red rock, is of a most vivid green.

Beyond the grey cliff the red begins again, stretching away nearly to Beer Head, that white headland that

almost seems to melt into the shadowy line of the Dorset coast beyond. Teignmouth is at last visible beyond the Ness, but Dawlish is hidden behind the "Parson and Clerk." Yet you can see Exmouth distinctly, and even a bit of the little watering place of Budleigh Salterton. The blue of the sea, the red of the cliffs, the green of the grass and foliage, make up a feast of colour that I do not believe can be equalled north of the Mediterranean. Nor is this all—for along the cliffs between Babbacombe and Teignmouth stretches a line of cultivated undercliff, where a patch of yellow corn climbing the ruddy slope lends its tints to the already gorgeous landscape.

The village, or I suppose we must now call it town, of Marychurch, Torquay's most important suburb, spreads away over the high ground above Babbacombe beneath the shadow of the tall tower of the church of St. Mary, a very handsome building erected about forty years ago on the site of an earlier structure of which little remains but the old Norman font covered with grotesque carving consisting of hunting scenes, a raven tearing the body of a man, and "what appears to be a tumbler or 'joculator,' such a figure as occurs in contemporary illuminations." Some writers think this font Saxon, and as the church is traditionally said to have been the oldest in Devon, and is mentioned in Domesday Book, it is quite possible that it may be so. The tower is a prominent landmark for miles, and almost equally so is the graceful spire of the Roman Catholic church.

From Walls Hill, or, as it is more commonly called, Babbacombe Down, the path winds downwards among some rather intricate stone walls to the strand, passing a tiny pier. The cove proper is very small. For some yards the foliage comes almost to the water's edge, then the cliffs begin again. Here and there the path is carried along a wooden platform, without which at

high water foot passengers would be unable to get round the cliffs at all, so narrow is the strip of shingle between cliff and sea.

Abutting on the beach are the grounds of the Glen, which a few years ago was the scene of a horrible murder. The butler, a man named Lee, murdered his mistress, an unprotected maiden lady. The fellow was arrested, tried, and sentenced to be executed. The evidence upon which he was convicted was, it should be remarked, purely circumstantial, for no one saw the deed committed. And now happened a remarkable thing. The gallows refused to perform their office—it is said that the wood was warped—and the authorities, thinking that as the unhappy man had already tasted the bitterness of death it would be cruelty to persist, granted a reprieve, and commuted his sentence to that of penal servitude for life. There are not wanting those who look upon him as an injured man, and regard the jamming of the gallows as a Divine interposition in his favour. Nor is this altogether to be wondered at. On the morning appointed for his execution Lee told the warder that he had dreamed that, though three attempts would be made to hang him, neither would succeed. The warder reported the matter to the governor, but he, of course, had no power, even if he had had the inclination, to stay the sentence. What makes the whole affair more strange is that the text for the day in the pocket-book which the governor habitually carried was, "Surely it is the hand of the Lord which has done this."\*

The house in which the foul deed was done has been pulled down. Only strong-minded people care to live in a house that has been the scene of a midnight murder. "It stood empty for years," said a boatman to me. "At last the

\* I take the latter part of this story from Evelyn Burnaby's "Ride from Land's End to John o' Groat's."

owner decided to pull it down ; but, just as he had got the roof off, a gentleman from London offered to take it. But it was too late."

The upper part of Babbacombe, adjoining Marychurch, is of the usual speculative builder type. There is nothing interesting about it and very little that is beautiful, if we except All Saints' Church, one of Butterfield's gems, rich with local marbles.

At Oddicombe Sands there is excellent bathing, for the white quartzose pebbles are too small and round to bruise the feet, and the water is clear as crystal. Mr. Thomas is again to the fore with refreshments, and an announcement—this time couched in prose—that he is under the patronage of Royalty. At the extreme end of the "Sands" a path winds up the broken red cliff among thorns and gorse to Petit Tor, a tall crag of grey marble scarred by quarries. On the northern side a deep hollow descends abruptly to the sea. Red boulders that have fallen from the cliff above rise from the fern and brambles, and on the shore is the spiral rock of sandstone known as Lot's Wife.

We shall now leave the cliffs for awhile and take the high road to Teignmouth. It is possible, by following a rough path a little further on, to walk through the under-cliff, but this entails hard work, and the pleasure is scarcely commensurate with the toil. So we get into the lane leading to the Watcombe Terra Cotta Works, where is made the pretty red clay pottery of which the Torquay china shops are so full. The clay is so fine and malleable that it can be manipulated into ornaments of the most fragile nature. The *combe* is a picturesque landslip among the cliffs, one of several along this piece of coast.

This Teignmouth road runs parallel with and close to the coast. Only occasional glimpses, however, can be had of it, as there is generally higher ground between highway and



sea. At one place we look down Maidencombe, a "little dell and cove" green and wooded; at another, not far from Teignmouth, where a turn in the road brings it nearly to the edge of the cliff, we are above Labrador, where on another bit of landslip or undercliff has been built a small hotel surrounded by a fruit garden, a favourite resort of the inhabitants of Teignmouth.

The view inland from this road is very beautiful. Mile after mile rich valleys roll away westward, the red soil imparting a warmth of colouring that no other tint can give, and far away, almost as softly blue as the sky against which they stand, the rugged heights of Dartmoor bound the horizon—Rippon Tor, Saddle Tor, and Hey Tor, the last with its two great bosses of granite visible from almost any cliff between Berry Head and Branscombe.

And now round a bend in the road Teignmouth comes into view, the sandy horn on which the lower part of the town is built seemingly nearly blocking the outlet of the river. There is a good bird's-eye view of the whole town, and especially of the more aristocratic portion—the villas and terraces set on the green and wooded slopes that stretch upward to the semi-moorland range of Little Haldon. The village to the left of the town with the ivied church tower is Bishop's Teignton, a place gaining some little repute as a health resort. Below us the road winds downward to Shaldon, a pleasant old-fashioned village along the water side. Shaldon is connected with Teignmouth by a very long bridge, mostly of wood. Whether it is, as the people boast, the longest bridge in England, I cannot say; but it is 1672 feet in length, and that is quite long enough on a windy day at any rate. At one time it is said to have been the longest but one in Europe—next to the Pont de Lyons, and *that* is only thirty feet longer. For anything I know, it may still be the longest *road* bridge in the kingdom, though of course there are several railway bridges of

greater length (those spanning the Forth and Tay, for example), not to speak of one in this very county—Brunel's great masterpiece across the Tamar.

Over this bridge must go all vehicles bound from Torquay to Teignmouth. But we are not "carriage folk," but humble pedestrians, and may save a mile by dropping down a lane to the strand just opposite the sandbank, where there are half a dozen boatmen ready and willing to compete for the honour of ferrying us across for the modest sum of one penny. For it is not an easy pull always. At low tide, for instance—or, indeed, at any time when the current is strong—it requires some vigour to make headway. For the Teign is a swift river, and the narrowing of its mouth makes it swifter. I have steered a boat across myself, and found it difficult enough to bring up at a certain mark on the further shore.

The worst of most estuaries is that when the salt water has gone seawards they are full of sandbanks—too often of mud. The Teign is no exception, and at low tide there are acres and acres left bare. Fortunately, however, the mud is *en évidence* but little—indeed, this is the charm of most of the Devonshire rivers. They come down clear from their moorland cradles, and, with but one or two exceptions, are not—from an artistic point of view—cursed by the presence on their banks of filth-discharging factories. Still, it must be confessed that they look better when the tide is full, and this is particularly the case with such wide estuaries as those of the Exe and Teign—the two widest in Devonshire. And of these two, I prefer the Teign, for the hills come down nearer to the water, and there is none of that level ground lying between the high land and the river which is characteristic of the right bank of the Exe. And what beautiful hills they are! Whether the eye rests on the rich green slopes of Ringmoor and Combe-in-Teignhead, or upon the blue tors that seem to

look down—though they are far away—on the head of the estuary, there is the same feeling of restful enjoyment. Every inch is cultivated, every slope parcelled out into fields. At one spot, indeed, above Shaldon some loyalist has divided his piece of ground into a representation of the Union Jack. This singular piece of work, probably the idea of some old skipper living close at hand, is very conspicuous from the Great Western Railway, which skirts the northern shore of the estuary.

I think we all owe a deep debt of gratitude to Brunel for this picturesque bit of line. Not only are the beauties of the Teign to be enjoyed *otium cum dignitate*, but those of the Exe as well, while the line between the two estuaries is audaciously made to skirt the very edge of the sea, opening up the most delightful vistas of red cliff, isolated crag, and distant coast line. Whether, however, the company feels quite so grateful is another matter. I fancy that since the great landslip of 1853, when 4000 tons of cliff swept the railway into the sea, a good bit of money must have been spent in repairing the sea wall, massive though it be. But, as I am not a shareholder, no such *arrière pensée* comes to trouble my enjoyment, and the great genius has my warmest thanks.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The boatman lands us, and we make our way up the shingle to the granite lighthouse that stands at the end of the Den. This Den has no connection with wild animals—other than those of the genus "'Arry," by which on excursion days it is much affected; it is the promenade of the human species. I expect the name is a contraction of Dene, which, again, is a corruption of Dune, for the Den is nothing more or less than a long sandbank, which the good taste of Teignmouth has converted into a lawn gay with flower beds. From the middle projects an iron pier, where, when they have tired of the promenade, the inhabitants of

Teignmouth may parade themselves, or thence embark on one of the many pleasure boats that cluster about the head of the same. For Teignmouth in its way is a lively town, and, although lacking the genteel manners of Dawlish and the patrician air of Torquay, is not at all the sort of place where the holiday maker will find it difficult "to spend a happy day."

At the back of the Den, on the low ground, is the older part of the town, known as West Teignmouth. Here, inside the curve hollowed out by the river current, many a vessel lies at anchor—good old wooden ships, for the ugly iron collier, "wallsided" and towering twenty feet out of the water, cannot negotiate the bar outside. As a consequence there is more of the picturesque about the shipping of Teignmouth than about that of other and more important seaports. One sees the heavy coasting smack with sails tanned red, brown, or ochre, perhaps bringing coals round from the Forest of Dean or from Wales; the more graceful schooner which ships the china clay from further up the river, while the brigantines and one or two old-fashioned brigs speak to the salt fish trade with Newfoundland. These on a calm summer evening, their reflections quivering in the water, and with the sun getting low over the tall fir-crowned cliff of the Ness, make up a very pleasant picture indeed.

The division of the town into east and west is a division only in name—an easier way, perhaps, of denoting the two parishes of Teignmouth Regis and Teignmouth Episcopi. It is an old town, as may be seen by its narrow streets, though few ancient houses now survive. Here the Danes are said to have landed in 970,\* and committed great slaughter.

\* Dr. Bellamy says that they landed in 800, and adds: "This is the first notice of these people." The "first notice" in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle refers to a descent on the Dorset coast in 787, and states plainly "These were the first ships of Danishmen which sought the land of the English nation." Neither the descent of 800 or of 970 is mentioned by the Chronicle, though the omission, of course, proves nothing.

The legend says that one Cuthbert of Bradlea managed to possess himself of the enemy's standard, the magic "Raven." His wife Ella, knowing something of its attributes, persuaded him to consult the wise man Osric. Osric declared that "if the dark bird lay still on the crimson folds of the standard, the Dane would never again set foot in England; but if it took flight, the evil day was still in store." Hardly had they turned away when the figure upon the standard became instinct with life, rose, and soared away.\*

In common with Plymouth and Dartmouth, Teignmouth suffered greatly from descents of the French. They burnt it in 1347. In 1690, when the Court of St. Germain was attempting to bolster up the cause of a fallen king, they attacked it again. Admiral Tourville with a fleet of seventy-eight sail having defeated Lord Torrington, who had but fifty-six ships, off Beachy Head, thought it a favourable opportunity for further vengeance. He accordingly bore down upon Teignmouth, burnt it and part of Shaldon as well, and returned in triumph to Brest. In Cooke's "*Topographical Survey of the County of Devon*"—a little book published very early in the century—we are informed that this disaster occurred in the reign of Queen Anne! and, with more accuracy, that the inhabitants by means of a brief were soon after enabled to rebuild one of the streets, which they called French-street, in memory of the calamity.

Having regard to the existing churches at Teignmouth, the remarks made by this writer are instructive. He says that East Teignmouth Church has—save the mark!—"a venerable appearance, and dates from a period not long after the Norman Conquest." It has anything but a venerable appearance now, because, as Walcott says, the "Norman windows and massive central tower were

\* Walcott, p. 431.

disgracefully altered in 1831." Fortunately the south door was spared, and this is now about the only remnant of any particular style in the church. Even that, however, has been so "restored" that it looks almost as new as the rest of the building, which exhibits a medley of nearly every architectural style under the sun. There is, however, a beautiful font of Devonshire marbles.

In Cooke's day the church of West Teignmouth was a very ancient stone building with a roof "supported in a singular manner by the ramifications of a wooden pillar formed from the trunk of a single tree." The church of to-day, erected in 1805, is an octagon, the exterior covered with stucco, and altogether a marvel of ugliness.

There are good firm sands extending from the mouth of the Teign to the Parson and Clerk Rocks, midway between Teignmouth and Dawlish. But these sands can only be followed when the tide is out—at high water we are again indebted to Brunel. For along the seaward face of the railway wall he constructed a path or promenade, by which we may walk almost to the Parson. Here the railway plunges into a tunnel in the cliff, and we must pass beneath the line where it is carried on arches over a little cove and take a lane which leads up into the high road running near the cliff top. This lane—there was once a cave at the foot, but the railway has destroyed it—is known as Smugglers' Lane, and if the red banks had tongues they could doubtless tell of many a midnight party passing inland with kegs of French brandy or bales of tobacco, neither of which lost anything in flavour for not having paid duty. It is a green, shady spot notwithstanding its civilisation and confinement between tarred palings and the walls of villa gardens above. Here, as in many other of the hedges between Haldon and the sea, will be found the pink madder growing wild.

They are a strange-looking couple, the Parson and his Clerk. The former leans against the headland, to which his shoulders are, as it were, attached, forming a natural archway through which the tide dyed red by his shadow ebbs and flows. Outside, completely surrounded by the water, stands the Clerk, a tall pinnacle. He is more venerable looking than his superior, for he is a favourite perch for the gulls, and his head is quite white. Neither, however, bear much resemblance to the characters they are supposed to represent. As for the Parson, his figure is more that of a woman than a man.

Their story I have told already.\* All I can repeat here is that they suddenly appeared after a dreadful storm in which, for their iniquities—though I never could see that the clerk was much to blame—a parson and his clerk were drowned.

There are beautiful views along the road to Dawlish, especially from Lee Mount, where, after a mile or so of dusty high road, we again take to the cliffs. This is a favourite resort of the Dawlish people, and once more there is a wide panorama of the bay, stretching backwards to Hope's Nose and forwards to Beer Head and—if the day be clear enough—Portland. As we rest upon one of the seats among the trees that crest this eminence, and let the eye roam over the fertile and populous country at our feet, the contrast between this scenery and that of the savage coast about Bolt Head cannot fail to strike us. It is difficult to believe that we are in the same county and looking upon the same sea.

Dawlish lies in a shallow valley on either side of green lawns. A little brook, the Dawlish Water—a brook that swarms with trout—flows down the middle, passing to the sea beneath the low Egyptian viaduct which carries the railway along the sea front. It is a clean, pretty little

\* See "*The Rivers of Devon.*"

town, with nothing ugly about it but the railway, and even that has been constructed so as to offend the eye as little as possible. Most of what we see from the beach; or, rather, railway, is modern—the old village lies further up the valley.

Close to the railway station is a tower\* crowned with a cupola—a relic of the days of Brunel. His idea at first was to work the trains by atmospheric pressure, and an engine house was erected of which this tower was the chimney. But the experiment was a failure. Another engine house may be seen at Starcross, the next station towards Exeter, but the tower is not so graceful. Dawlish Church stands on the left bank of the brook some way up the valley. The situation is pleasant. Meadows and orchards lie about it; woods fill the head of the valley beyond. It is not very interesting from an antiquarian point of view as most of it has been rebuilt. But it is a well-looking church with a good Perpendicular tower and lofty nave, while the Early English chancel and transepts are wide and airy, and the east window is undoubtedly fine. It is a pity that a great part of the exterior should be disfigured with stucco. There are no monuments of particular interest, but in an angle of the wall outside the east end stand the base and part of the shaft of an ancient cross. In the south-west corner of the churchyard is an area inclosed by a wall pierced by an arcade of elegant Early English arches divided by double columns of red sandstone. This is the burial place of Luscombe, the seat of the Hoares.

The origin and meaning of the name Dawlish has provoked no little discussion. About the name there is, however, no doubt; it was *Doflisc*, by which name Bishop Leofric gave the manor to the cathedral of Exeter, and, as Murray says, it belonged to the chapter till early in the

\* Now removed.



present century, when it was sold to redeem the land tax. But what *Doflisc* meant is another question. Old Polwhele, who is nothing if not picturesque, makes it to signify "a fruitful mead by the river side," unless I am mistaken, and certainly his interpretation fits this sunny valley to a nicety.

Next to Paignton, Dawlish has the best bathing beach in South Devon. In fact, it was the beach which brought the town. Even a hundred years ago its praises were sung by a certain Dr. Downman, who, after indulging in the usual rhapsodies at that time so fashionable, continues thus :

To thee will I consign  
Often the timid virgin, to thy pure  
Incircling waves ; to thee will I consign  
The feeble matron ; or the child on whom  
Thou mayst bestow a second happier birth  
From weakness unto strength.

But we must leave his "lovely strand," "towering cliffs," and "bubbling brook" behind, and continue our walk to the north-east, where the terraces of Exmouth look down upon the meeting of Exe with the sea. The railway walk extends to Langstone Point, through which the line cuts before turning inland to follow the estuary to Starcross and Exeter. Here the cliffs end, and the wayfarer has the choice of two routes to Exmouth. The first and nearest is across the sandy waste of the Warren, a bank cast up by the sea and projecting, after the fashion of the Den at Teignmouth, into the outlet of the river. The second is by the steamboat from Starcross,\* a good two miles and a half up the estuary. If you are going by the railway, you will, of course, make use of the latter route ; but for pedestrians the way across the Warren is preferable notwithstanding that the sand makes the walking at times difficult.

\* Said by some to owe its name to a cross that once stood beside the landing place ; by others to be simply the *stairs* for *crossing* the river.

It is a long, desolate piece of waste, this warren, and I recommend no one who is a stranger to attempt to cross it after dark. For at high water parts of it are covered by the sea, which leaves as it retires pools and slimy streams that are unpleasant if not absolutely dangerous to encounter. Most of it is covered with grass or rushes. Except as a rifle range, it is apparently of little use. At one time an attempt was made to lay down oyster beds at the broad end near the "Bight," the name given to that part of the estuary that lies, a calm sheet of water, along the inner slope. But I do not think the projectors of this enterprise ever made much of it, and I fancy the most valuable product of the Warren nowadays is the rabbit.

The Exe estuary is the widest in Devonshire—at Starcross more than a mile across. And it is one of the shallowest. Even at high water vessels must stick close to the channel of the river; if they do not, they will infallibly "take the ground" on one of the numerous sand banks. At one time the tide flowed as far as Exeter, and ships sailed right up to the "faithful city," as it loves to call itself; but, owing to a quarrel between the civic authorities and the family of the Earl of Devon,\* the channel was obstructed, and navigation, so far as the river is concerned, ends at Turf just above, though on the opposite side to the little waterside town of Topsham. From this point vessels reach Exeter by canal.

The surroundings of this broad sheet of water—for it is more like a lake than a river—are very soft and pleasant. On the one hand is the green expanse of undulating country that lies between the river and the dark line of Haldon, of which the most noticeable features are the white houses of Starcross and the grey castle of Powderham, for centuries the seat of the Earls of Devon, set in the midst of its oak-studded park. On the eastern shore the low green

\* "Rivers of Devon."

hills form a background to the village of Lympston and further up to the houses of Topsham, a sleepy place which once knew better days. Straight ahead is Exmouth, its terraces rising one above the other, and the tall tower of its church commanding land and sea for miles.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FROM EXMOUTH TO SIDMOUTH.

**Exmouth—Littleham—West Down Beacon—Woodbury Castle—Hayes Barton, and Sir Walter Raleigh—The Introduction of Tobacco—Budleigh Salterton—The River Otter—Ladram Bay—High Peak—Sidmouth—A Ridiculous River.**

**Hills and valleys where April rallies his radiant squadrons of flowers and birds,  
Steep strange beaches and lustrous reaches of fluctuant sea that the land engirds,  
Fields and downs that the sunrise crowns with life diviner than lives in words.**

**ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.**

“THE town looks very hard at the river, the houses all staring over one another’s shoulders, as if they had flocked together from inland and saw something very interesting on the opposite bank, or at least felt much concerned to see how Starcross—a young rival watering place on the other side—was getting on.”

Such is a serio-comic but nevertheless very accurate description of the appearance from a distance of the town at the mouth of the Exe. There is a curious air of wide-awakedness about Exmouth. There is nothing retiring about it ; it looks as if nothing could come within range of its window batteries without being severely criticised. It is bolt upright, uncompromising, self-confident, and the serried rows of houses bask in the hot sun with a defiant scorch-me-if-you-can air that makes one long for the shady avenues of Torquay.

As a watering place it has, like Dawlish and other neighbours, sprung into existence almost within the present century. I have read somewhere that it owes its

reputation to the dictum of a judge, whose health so improved during his visit that he sung its praises far and wide. So it has grown from a mere fishing village into a town of 6000 inhabitants. Nor is it purely a watering place. There are docks hard by where the ferryman lands us—not very extensive, it is true, but still sheltering a ship or two. In days of yore, before the bar outside the river mouth had silted up, it must have had a fair trade. But it is best known as a health resort, and the many villas that have sprung up on the hill above the town testify to its growing popularity.

And it is not unknown to history. Sweyn landed his Danes here in 1001, “and there,” as the chronicler says, “continued fighting stoutly; but they were very strenuously resisted.” The resistance, however, seems to have been of no effect. “Then went they through the land, and did all as was their wont; destroyed and burnt . . . and their last incursion was even worse than the one before.”\* The invaders seem to have come from the Teign, where they burnt Teignton, probably Bishop’s Teignton, or perhaps King’s Teignton. For the next six centuries the lot of the port seems to have been peaceful. But it could not but be embroiled in the Civil War. The fort of sixteen guns garrisoned for the King was compelled to surrender to the Parliamentary troops under Sir Hardresse Waller. This fort stood upon the Warren, the channel of the Exe at that time being much nearer Starcross than now—in fact, to the westward of the fort.

The town of Exmouth is not very interesting, but the suburbs, which spread over the hills at the back, are pleasant enough. The Beacon, a hill commanding extensive views over land, river, and sea, is deservedly popular. Hence you may see the best part of the estuary, the woods and castle of Powderham, the villas of Starcross, and the rich undulating tract of country that lies

\* Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

at the foot of Haldon, which rises, a long dark line of moorland, in striking contrast to the emerald pastures below. From another point you may look across the river's mouth along the sandy waste of the Warren to the red cliffs of Dawlish and Teignmouth until the view is closed by Berry Head. Eastward, there is no view except along the Strand, a drive following the curve of the shore for about a mile to a battery, whence, as the coast line turns for awhile to the north, the rising ground shuts out further view.

The cliffs do not recommence till Exmouth has been left behind for nearly two miles, and the walk along the shore to Straight Point, where they first attain any elevation, is fatiguing. Most pedestrians bound eastward will eschew it as much as they do the terribly dusty high road, and take to the lane which leads to the village of Littleham, lying between the said road and the sea. A third way is by water, and perhaps, if the traveller is geologically inclined, this way is the best; for he can study the red walls all the time, and land at whatever point he likes.

And it is easy enough, too. Boats of all shapes and sizes are plentiful, not only at Exmouth, but at all the towns and villages fringing this coast, and an ancient mariner is always at hand ready and willing—sometimes too willing—to impart his store of legend and tradition concerning the spots you sail past so merrily. And then for the mere pleasure seeker there is the Exmouth steamer (much girded at by the tradespeople “because,” as one of them told me, “she takes visitors away during the day, and brings them back after the shops are closed”), a swift and well-found craft sailing almost daily during the summer months along this favoured shore. For those who have no fear of that

Curious up and down motion  
That comes from the treacherous ocean,

or the *wamble* in the inner man, to which an old Devonshire

writer\* was not ashamed to confess, a seat on her bridge is perhaps more comfortable than the thwarts of a boat. Still, if you go by water you see little or nothing of the country inland, and, believe me, some of it is well worth seeing. We, then, will let the geologist depart in his boat, and the excursionist embark on the *Duchess*, and take the lane to Littleham.

As a village Littleham is rather disappointing. It is one of those places that affords wonderful "bits" for the photographer, and I am sure that anyone seeing some of the views in the Exmouth shop windows would expect something quite idyllic. I have one before me now representing a group of picturesque thatched cottages with walls of whitewashed "cob" bordering a stream in which are reflected a line of elms. But alas! when you get to the spot "a change comes o'er the spirit of your dream." And yet everything is there—cottages, stream, elms—everything. But the cottages do not look nearly so picturesque as the photograph makes them, and the stream—alas! for the stream. It is a muddy ditch full of broken crocks and other "unconsidered trifles" from the cottages. Yet the village is pretty notwithstanding; I only warn the public not to put too much faith in bits photographic.

And Littleham has an interesting church with a Decorated chancel, divided from the nave by a fine oak screen. In the churchyard lie the remains of the wife of the great Lord Nelson, and, strange as it may seem, the monument is in anything but well-preserved condition. Littleham is one of the parish churches of Exmouth, the other being that of Withycombe Raleigh. Both are a long way from the town, nearly three miles—so the inhabitants ought to be grateful to the late Lord Rolle for giving them their chapel-of-ease, the

\* Westcote.

tall tower of which is so conspicuous an object from the opposite shore of the estuary. As for the old parish church of Withycombe Raleigh, known by the fanciful name of St. John in the Wilderness—it is really dedicated to St. Michael—it is an ivy-covered ruin.

Beyond Littleham a footpath leads up to West Down Beacon, a lofty cliff looking down upon Budleigh Salterton. The common at the top is covered with heather, the first we have seen since leaving Plymouth, and the paths are strewn with flints, showing that we have reached a geological formation not wholly consisting of sandstone. But the cliffs are as red as ever, and there is a long stretch of them in both directions, the lighter tinted coast of Dorset forming a contrast, and reminding us of those lines in the "Ingoldsby Legends":

It really seems queer that this Devonshire coast,  
While neighbouring Dorset gleams white as a ghost,  
Should look like anchovy spread upon toast.

Inland the valleys are as green and fertile as ever, but the loftier hills are, like the Beacon, barren and covered with heather. On one of them, about four miles distant, is Woodbury Castle, a large British earthwork or camp. The original shape of the "castle" was oval, but it has been altered by the addition of outworks. There is a tradition that it was once occupied by the Romans. The Romans, however, do not appear to have thrown up these outworks. Murray states that there is a supposition that they were thrown up during the Devonshire rebellion in the reign of Edward the Fourth, "when Lord Russell defeated the insurgents near this place." What is *certain* is that the camp was occupied by artillery for five years—from 1798 to 1803—the period when the inhabitants of the South Coast lived in continual dread of a descent by the "little Corsican."



Out among these hills, too, but nearer than Woodbury Castle, is the old church of St. John in the Wilderness, once, as I have said, the parish church of Withycombe Raleigh. On the eastern side of the hills we can almost see the home of the family from which the village took its name—the farm of Hayes Barton. The house is low, with gabled roof covered with thatch, and beneath the deep porch is a massive door, studded with iron nails. In the room to the left above the porch Sir Walter is said to have been born. Probably the house has altered little since the days when he lived there, more than three centuries ago. A mile to the right—I almost think that is the tower among those elms—is East Budleigh Church, where he worshipped as a boy, and there you will find the family pew, with the date 1537 and the Raleigh arms carved on the oak panel. And in the nave is the grave of his wife Joan, the inscription reading oddly from right to left. By her side, if the gossips may be believed, lies the hero's head—the head of the man who fell a victim to Spanish intrigue and the fears of an avaricious and pusillanimous king.

A writer in the *Cornhill* has a pleasant reference to Hayes Barton. "Its projecting porch and heavily thatched gables have," he says, "an old-world look about them; but on the whole it takes its fame as a matter of course, and makes no great pretensions to be anything more than an Elizabethan country house. The hills rise above it at the back, stacks close in around it, you hear the cows lowing from the 'linneys,' the garden is full of old-fashioned flowers, and a genial atmosphere of peace hangs over it. The general features of the place must have changed very little since Sir Walter rambled about the quiet woodland ways which hem it in. Here he cherished boundless dreams of El Dorado, galleons, and ingots. Hayes Wood in front and the hills behind must often have seen him, like another Alexander, chafing at the narrow horizon of his

world. . . . How often must he have turned in fancy to this little homestead when fainting under a tropical sun or chafing as a prisoner in the Tower! The mind, they say, often revisits early scenes in the moment of death. Raleigh may have seemed to hear the sheep bleat and called up in fancy the well-remembered outline of Hayes Farm against yonder green hillside as he closed his eyes and laid his head on the block."

From grave to gay. Sir Walter Raleigh is usually credited with the introduction into England of tobacco. But, according to a local legend, he was *not* the first who brought the fragrant weed to this country. Tobacco became known in this way: Two gentlemen of these parts, Sir Roger Walingham of Withycombe and Sir Hugh de Crevelde of Littleham had quarrelled about certain rights of fishing and fowling and the division of the plunder from the wreck of a Genoese galliot. Sir Hugh wished his enemy dead, and even while indulging in the wicked thought Sir Roger sickened and died. Whether the malefic thoughts of Sir Hugh had hastened his departure or not, the story does not say; but what it *does* say is that Sir Roger began to haunt Sir Hugh to such purpose that he in his turn began to sicken. Opposite him at his meals, by his side in the ingle nook, about his couch at night, Sir Hugh saw, or thought he saw, the ghost of the defunct knight of Withycombe. But a remedy was coming. One day a sea captain from the Spanish Main presented him with a pipe and a twist of brown leaf, and to the latter set a light. Sir Hugh puffed and felt better; then he puffed again and forgot all about the spirit. In fact, the spectre was exorcised. He could not stand tobacco smoke. For spectres, be it known, "breathe only pure oxygen without azote; it is only we mortals who are 'compelled to inhale the mixed elements.'" So Sir Hugh recovered, and, delighted with the wonderful drug—as he well might be—

introduced it to Raleigh's father, to whom also he left the pipe, and from him it "descended to the great Sir Walter, who, as this legend runs, planned his expedition to Virginia on purpose to fill it." \*

As we descend the cliff pathway to Budleigh Salterton, the *Duchess* is nearing the shore. Surely she will stop presently, for there is no pier, and the passengers must land in boats. But nothing of the kind. She steams straight for the beach, only stopping as her bow touches the pebbles. Then a long stage is run out, down which the passengers troop to the shore. It is an original way of disembarking, and looks not a little dangerous. But the fact is the beach slopes so rapidly that there is no danger of grounding, and, except in rough weather, the steamer can take no harm. It need scarcely be said that the feat is only attempted when the water is quite smooth.

The pebbles of this beach have something of a local reputation. Many of them are very beautifully coloured, a malachite blue and amber-like brown being the richest tints. When dry they attract little notice, but moisture at once brings out their latent beauty, and, when held against the sun, some of them appear almost transparent. Good specimens take a high polish, and make handsome brooches and other ornaments. They are plentiful at many spots between Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth—I have picked up some particularly fine specimens in Ladram Bay. Those at Budleigh Salterton have fallen from a bed in the cliffs. They are quartzite, and, though some are Devonian, many are Silurian. These latter have attracted much attention from geologists, and both Mr. W. Vicary, F.G.S., and Mr. Pengelly, well-known local geologists, have had their say on the matter. It seems that there are none of like character nearer than Cornwall or France, and it is suggested that the appearance of these Silurian pebbles is

\* Mrs. Whitcombe.

due to a "pre-Triassic extension of the Silurian rocks of Calvados and La Manche."

Half hidden in myrtle and hydrangea, the villas of Budleigh Salterton cover the bottom and slopes of a valley that inclines gently to the shore. There is only one street worth noticing—that which fills the bottom—and along its side rattles a little brook, crossed by innumerable "rustic" bridges. There are no trains, and consequently few excursionists. The place is cheerful and sunny, and the inhabitants appear to take life with a pleasant philosophy. There is neither bustle nor noise. Such is Budleigh Salterton.

The little town—it is but a little one, only one-third the size of Exmouth—is the growth of recent years. Formerly a tiny fishing hamlet, far smaller than the neighbouring villages, it owes its increase to the light and buoyant air, which, without being bracing, is far less enervating than the atmosphere of Torquay or Dawlish, and to many its quietude is an attraction. The railway comes no nearer than Exmouth, and the every-day "tripper" thinks twice before paying for a bus ride of the best part of an hour. And the neighbourhood has charms of its own, particularly the green strath of the Otter—that little river winding to the sea under the low red bluff at the eastern horn of the bay. I have lively recollections of an evening walk along the river bank to Otterton, through level meadows dotted with sheep and cattle and musical with the voice of the swift river flowing beneath the steep park that rises abruptly from its very brink. Like the cliff, the bank is deep red, and the effect of the reflection upon the river was curious. As the declining sun cast its rays upon the water, these reflections became so brilliant that, had it not been possible to see the gravel of the river bed, one would almost have taken the water to be tinged with blood. This is no exaggeration—I have met with others who have noticed the same effect.

To the poet this river is, or ought to be, almost sacred, for on its banks is the birthplace of Coleridge, and the Otter is the

Dear native brook ! where first young Poesy  
Stared wildly eager in her noontide dream !

The poet's home was at Ottery St. Mary, some ten miles up the river ; but the following lines descriptive of his recollections might apply almost as well to these the lower waters of the stream as to the upper :

Mine eyes  
I never shut amid the sunny ray  
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise—  
The crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,  
And bedded sand that veined with various dyes  
Gleam'd thro' thy bright transparence.

In the Middle Ages the mouth of the Otter was a much larger affair than is the case to-day. "Less than an hunderith yeres sins," writes Leland, "shippes usid this haven, but it is now clean barred." A hundred years before Leland's time would be somewhere between the middle and end of the fifteenth century—say four hundred years ago. It was then known as Budleigh Haven—being so called, not, as might be expected, after Budleigh Salterton, but after East Budleigh, or, as Leland calls it, "Budleigh town." "In those days this village was a small market town," and, apparently, reached by the tide—now far away—for it is described as "on the west side of the haven, right almost against Otterton." It is not, however, on the Otter, but on a small tributary up which the tide may, quite possibly, have flowed, before the pebble bank at Budleigh Salterton dammed the passage.

The mouth of the Otter, such as it is—a gateway hemmed in by pebbles—lies about a mile from the centre of Budleigh Salterton. An esplanade bordering the pebbles runs most of the way ; then we strike inland and walk for another mile along the river bank to the footbridge that

spans the clear shallow stream almost within sight of the red cliffs that look down on its outlet through the pebbles. These cliffs, although here of no great height, have a broken, picturesque outline, and in many places are honeycombed with caves. In less than three miles Ladram Bay is reached, a deep indentation fringed with a beach of firm sand, which again is bordered immediately beneath the cliffs by a ridge of pebbles, many of very rich tints. The caves and the beach are the means of attracting many picnic parties to Ladram Bay. It is the only *sandy* beach for a long distance, and a woman at the cottage close by told me that hundreds visit it in summer-time merely for the bathing, some of them actually walking all the way from Budleigh Salterton!

And this beach was the saving of many lives some forty-five years ago, when in a terrific gale an Italian barque went ashore beneath the rugged red cliffs.

"Eh, it was a fearful gale," said a spectator to me, "and, as we battled along the cliffs, many and many a time had we to throw ourselves on the ground and clutch at the grass to prevent ourselves from being blown away altogether." Of course the ship had no chance. For more than twenty-four hours she had been trying to get out of the West Bay, but the wind was dead on shore. At length the captain—worn out, poor fellow—decided to run her ashore, and on the top of a tremendous sea the vessel rushed at the beach. With a crash that rose even above the tempest she struck, and almost immediately swung round broadside to the seas. Now was their opportunity. Losing not a moment, the crew lowered a boat into the comparatively smooth water formed by the shelter of the straining hull and reached the beach in safety.

At either end of the bay, like sentinels, stand two columns of red sandstone, by the persistent gnawing of the waves eaten away from the cliffs adjacent.

Two twin cliffs from land exiled  
Stand amid the tumult wild  
On either side the narrow bay,  
Alike in bulk and height are they :  
With quaint visage peer they out  
On the sullen waves, which pout  
At their feet or make wild bounds  
Up their sides like leaping hounds.

Another testimony to the power of the waves will be found in the cliff at the eastern end of the bay. This has been eaten through, forming an archway. Anywhere else the beautiful colouring of red rock and clear green water would excite remark ; but in this land of gorgeous hues the eye becomes sated, and one only exclaims at some tit-bit of special loveliness. Such a tit-bit is High Peak, the most beautiful cliff in South Devon ; it is also the loftiest. Scarce a hollow or fissure in its 511 feet but has a plant or creeper, giving the great precipice an appearance of extraordinary richness. Indeed, as a Devonshire writer declares, though "the beauty of outline is great, the High Peak is even more indebted to its wonderful variety of colour—colour that changes with every mood of the sky and with every hour of the day. Half veiled with mist, through which the sea birds float and wheel, sparkling in sunlight or resting half in shadow, with the bluest of seas stretching far away from its point, there is no limit to its changeful 'shows,' and the eye is never tired of watching them."

From Ladram Bay to the top of High Peak is a long, hot pull, and we shall be willing enough to rest awhile and enjoy the prospect over the great West Bay. As we look eastward the most striking feature—it is very near now—is the white cape of Beer Head, the most westerly outcrop of chalk in England. Beyond it stretches a dim line of coast ending in Portland Bill. In the other direction we can trace our wanderings, with one or two intervals, right away

to Sharpham Point near Dartmouth. Sidmouth is, of course, visible; so are the upper houses of Budleigh Salterton. Looking inland we have a bird's-eye view of the Vale of the Otter with its villages—Otterton, East Budleigh, and Collaton Raleigh. The mansion and church of Bicton are also within view, with the park and gardens that are celebrated throughout the South of England for the rare and beautiful trees with which they abound. Behind rise the dark heathery downs we saw from West Down Beacon, over which, in clear weather, you may see the tors of Dartmoor.

I am told that a careful search among the gorse and heather which cover the top of this great precipice will disclose the remains of an earthwork or "cliff castle," cast up in the days when Sidmouth was not, and when marsh and forest filled the Vale of Otter. I cannot say that I found much of it—perhaps I was too anxious to avoid the prickles—still it is there, though most of it has slipped into the sea long ago. At the eastern end a deposit of charcoal is (or was) visible, "the remains of ancient beacon or festival fires," and a layer of animals' bones, relics of former feasts. Round pebbles (perhaps sling stones), rude implements in flint and bone, and coarse pottery with pieces of red hæmatite have also been found.

High Peak has been claimed as the site of the *Moridunum* mentioned in Antonine's "Itinerary." But it has rivals in Hembury Fort, near Honiton, and Seaton.\* All that one can say is that its distance from Exeter and Dorchester respectively corresponds fairly with that given by the Roman writer. Still, I have never heard that a Roman road passes nearer than Ottery St. Mary, nearly equi-distant between High Peak and Hembury, or that Roman remains have been discovered there, though of

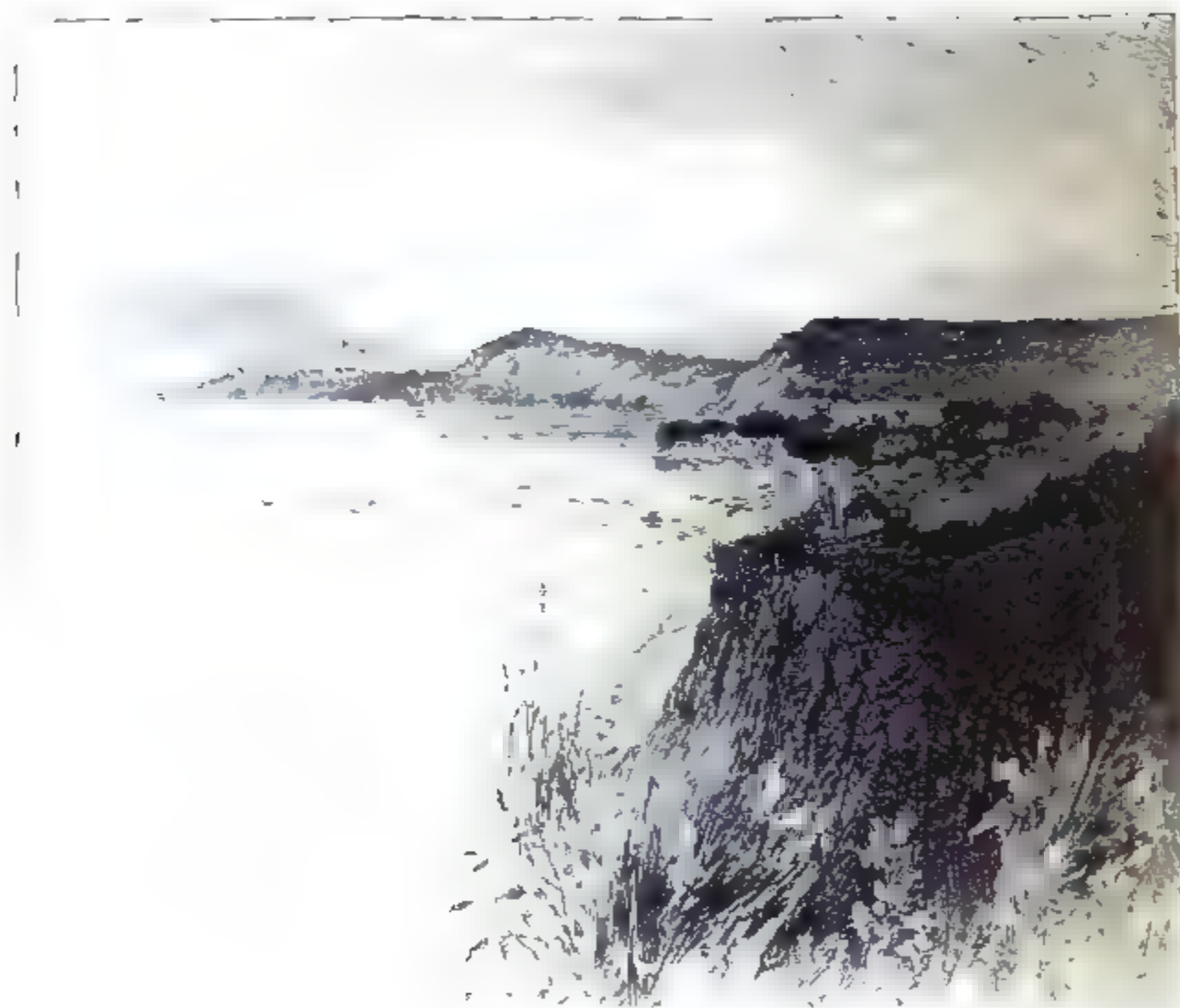
\* See *sub* Seaton.



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**SIDMOUTH.**

course their absence is no infallible proof that the Romans did not occupy the spot. Indeed, they have been found on Sidmouth Beach, perhaps washed up when the ramparts slid into the sea.\*

You will have a bad five minutes descending through the gorse—it is six feet high—on the eastern side of the hill. When that ends you come upon quite a grove of sloe bushes, like the gorse growing to an unusual height. Then there is a stile, and a better path leads over another lofty cliff and down into Sidmouth.

To my mind, Sidmouth is the pleasantest of the smaller watering places on this coast of Devon. Its prosperity is now pretty well assured, but there was a time when it was not in ignorance of the ups and downs of changeable fortune. It was once quite an important seaport, for High Peak (and perhaps Salcombe Hill as well) then projected much further into the sea and formed a sheltered bay. And a large trade in pilchards was carried on. But the cliffs fell back before the attack of the sea, the pilchard—most fickle of fish—betook himself further west, and Sidmouth languished. It was not till the beginning of the present century that it began to revive, when, owing to Royal and aristocratic patronage, it became a highly popular and fast-growing watering place. The Duke of Kent lived at the Glen, and with him the Princess Victoria, now our Queen. Here, too, dwelt that Mr. Boehm “at whose house in St. James’-square the Prince Regent was attending a grand ball when the news of the Waterloo victory was brought to him, and three of the French eagles were laid at his feet in the midst of the ball room by Henry Percy.† Mr. Boehm’s house was after-

\* Roman coins and a figure of Chiron the Centaur with his pupil Achilles behind his back. Shortt regards it as probably having belonged to a cohort of Carausius, and states that it was the device of the second legion. (“*Collectanea Curiosa Antiqua Dunmonia*,” p. 43.)

† R. J. King. “A Devonshire Watering Place.” *Standard*, Aug. 22, 1874.

wards occupied by Bacon, the sculptor, who wrote some ridiculous lines expressive of the satisfaction he felt with the charms of Sidmouth :

Mrs. Boehm wrote a poem  
On the Sidmouth air ;  
Mr. Boehm read the poem,  
And built a cottage there.  
Mr. Bacon all forsaken  
Wandered to the spot ;  
Mrs. Bacon he has taken  
Partner of his lot.  
As they longer live, the stronger  
Their affection grows ;  
Every season they with reason  
Bless the spot they chose !

Sidmouth was known, too, to Thackeray, and is immortalised as the Baymouth of "Pendennis." But the Duke of Kent died ; the aristocratic prestige of Sidmouth began to dwindle ; the railway, while pushing its way to Torquay and other spots, "passed by on the other side," and Sidmouth again declined. Now it is once more coming into notice, for the railway has arrived, and, although it is hardly yet a fashionable watering place, it is a very attractive one, and—a great point in the rainy West—has the least rainfall in Devonshire. There is no pier, and no great length of esplanade, because the cliffs will not allow it ; but the beauties of the valley down which the principal street winds parallel with the sparkling Sid are in themselves sufficient to attract anyone not on fashion—*i.e.*, the display of fine plumage—bent. And about it and behind it, and, indeed, everywhere except exactly in front of it, rise the green hills, one of them—that called Sidbury—crested with the ramparts of a fortress older even than the ancient village with the little Norman church to which it has given its name, and which lies almost beneath its shadow.

But there was once a Sidmouth as old as, perhaps older

than, Sidbury. For Sidmouth, as it now stands, was not the original settlement at the mouth of the Sid. No, the soft sandstone has given way, as it still does, before the encroaching waves, and the original Sidmouth now lies below the shifting shingle. More than once has a storm exposed the foundations of the dwellings of an early race—a pre-historic people, of whom little or nothing is known. We are told, even, that “early coins and relics are so frequently washed up by the sea that it is a common practice with the mudlarks of the place to search for them after storms,”\* though how there can be mudlarks without mud, I do not quite see. Coins and other relics are not, however, the only treasures found by Sidmouth folk, for among the pebbles of the beach are calcedonies, jasper, and agates, some of which take a high polish.

Sidmouth is a mixture of old and new. Down in the bottom, and at the end of the Esplanade, are the old houses which were standing before

Mr. Boehm

Built a cottage there.

The modern villas lie upon the slopes, not in lines, but dotted about with plenty of breathing room between, and with thick shrubberies shutting in the gardens from prying eyes. There is nothing very curious about the town, but the church of St. Giles, rebuilt, with the exception of the tower, is worth a visit. It has a handsome reredos, a pulpit of Devonshire marble, and many coloured windows—that at the west end the gift of the Queen in memory of her father.

At the end of the Esplanade the Sid comes downwards to meet the sea. It is a river—or rather a rivulet—without a mouth. The sea has been too much for it, and it dribbles ignominiously through, or, rather, *under*, the

\* *Vide* an old edition of Murray's Handbook.

pebbles. When a freshet takes place, this bank of pebbles is a serious inconvenience, as it ponds back the water, which, flooding the meadows, enters the low-lying houses. Then ensues a lively scene. Workmen hurry to the spot; the pebbles are dug away right and left, and with a rattle the imprisoned river rushes into the sea. But this artificial mouth lasts but a short time. The sea soon recommences the building-up process, and, before the waters have well subsided, the river disappears once more beneath the shingle.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### FROM SIDMOUTH TO SEATON.

Salcombe Hill—Salcombe Regis—Dunscombe—Weston Mouth—Petrifying Springs—Branscombe—An Ill-kept Church—Beer Head—Beer—Beer and the Armada—Lace-making—The Prince Consort's Wedding Lace.

HAVING crossed the river by the wooden footbridge that spans the current close to where the mouth ought to be, but is not, we shall find a footpath following the edge of the cliff to the top of Salcombe Hill. The seaward face of Salcombe Hill is but fourteen feet lower than High Peak; in fact, these two cliffs may be called "the great twin brothers" of Sidmouth. This Salcombe cliff is not so richly coloured as its fellow further west, and there is less vegetation. But it is more perpendicular, sinking nearly sheer to the beach, its surface perfectly corrugated with the beds of the runnels that after heavy rain pour down to the shore. Hereabouts, too, the geological formation alters somewhat. The red sandstone is no longer in its integrity, but has strata of marl and yellow clay capped by greensand. It is from the greensand that come the pebbles of the beach.

From Salcombe Hill a good view is to be had of the cliffs to the eastward, a stately line glowing with many colours. Near Beer Head the chalk begins to assert itself, ending at last in a promontory that would be almost pure white were it not for the patches of vegetation that cling to the snowy wall. Here and there portions of cliff have subsided, making an undercliff so warm and free from exposure to the east wind that almost anything will grow in its rents

and hollows. And man has not been slow to take advantage of the situation. Little squares of potato climb the slopes—potatoes that are dug almost as soon as those of Penzance and Scilly—varied with barley and other cereals. Often, I am told, two crops a year can be got out of these favoured but strangely placed gardens. Well that it is so, for the labour of cultivation must be immense.

There are three openings in this splendid wall of cliff—Salcombe, Weston Mouth, and Branscombe. The first lies at our feet—a green valley with steep sides, the bottom paved with pasture land. At its head lies the village of Salcombe Regis, and, as we begin to descend the narrow sheep track running diagonally down the slope, we sight the grey church tower rising boldly above the cottages backed by an amphitheatre of green hills. The sheep track ends in a cart road bordered with thickets; the cart track ends in a farmyard where dwells one of the noisiest dogs in creation. Avoiding the attentions of this Cerberus, we pass into a lane winding up to the village.

For two centuries at least the people of Salcombe Regis have plumed themselves on the royal name of their village. *King's Salcombe*, say they, because we were the last in Devonshire to hold out for King Charles. How the idea originated, I cannot certainly say; but I think the vicar's explanation must be the correct one. Salcombe Regis has in some way become confounded with Salcombe town near Kingsbridge, famous for its spirited defence under Sir Edmund Fortescue.\* So completely had the local fiction become an accepted fact, that one writer—and a learned writer, too—actually gives us chapter and verse, and gravely informs us that “its *fort* (fancy this out-of-the-way hamlet, commanding nothing, with a fort!) “was compelled to surrender June, 1646,” evidently mistaking the village for the town. Even sober Murray forty odd years

\* *Vide* Chapter XXI., *ante*.



ago fell into the same trap, though he has now made amends by telling us that the regal part of the name dates from a period long anterior to that of Charles, and is traceable to the gift of the manor by Canute to Exeter, in expiation for the ravages of his father, Sweyn. But even this is hardly correct, for, in the reign of Canute, Crediton, not Exeter, was the see. It was given to St. Peter's Monastery at Exeter probably, as Risdon says, by Canute; but by 1050, when the episcopal see was transferred to Exeter, it had passed into other hands. It was recovered by Bishop Leofric, and it was *then* that it became the property of the cathedral church of Exeter. Whether the suffix of Regis is owing to its connection with Canute, I do not know.

The church is very ancient, and still retains traces of the original building, which appears to have been erected about the twelfth century. The pillars are certainly Transition-Norman, and the font is of the same period. The chancel was just as old, for there is a Norman door, and on the outside of the wall, both above and below the east window, fragments of stone, carved in Norman fashion, are let into the more modern masonry, and are again found in the outer face of the walls on the north and south sides. Whether the window in the south wall is Transition-Norman or Early English, I am not confident. Both the chancel arch and those of the nave are apparently later additions, dating from the thirteenth century, and the deeply embayed lancet window in the south aisle is of the same date. The Early English trefoil piscina in the east end of the north aisle, near the door which once led to the rood loft, may owe its position there to the fact that this end of the aisle was probably at one time a chapel to St. Mary, to whom, with St. Peter, the church is dedicated. The arms of the diocese of Exeter (the cathedral church of which is also dedicated to St. Peter) will be found on the shields held by the angel corbels over the east window. For so small a church the

styles of architecture are many, for, of course, there is plenty of Perpendicular work besides.

The chancel contains one monument that must be unique. It is a tablet, dated 1695, to the memory of Joanna Avant, daughter of Philip Avant, a former vicar, and the inscription is in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and English.

Instead of making our way at once back to the cliffs, which, beautiful though they be, are very much like each other, we will follow the road for a season. Passing round to the back of the church, this road ascends the hillside. It is the street of the hamlet, and presently we see the school, a very pretty one, of which the good vicar is justly proud. Flowers climb the walls, while, cut on a tablet placed in the gable over the porch, may be read the Divine invitation, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." But once beyond the cottages the road is dull and dusty, not to say flinty as well, and we are glad, after a quarter of an hour's walk, to come upon something that will give us an excuse for pausing, if it be but for a few minutes.

On the right of the road lies Dunscombe Farm, a building that shows many traces of age. Here are the mullioned windows with heavy square dripstones, the roomy house place and massive timbers of a bygone day. The farm was a farm in the days of Elizabeth, and possibly formed part of the ivy-clad ruin from which it is separated but by a narrow passage. Local tradition calls these fragments of mouldering walls a "castle"—local tradition always *does*, except when it disdainfully dubs them "old barricks"—but there is not much appearance of a castle about it. It is much more likely to have been a manor house.

Dunscombe overlooks another combe—Weston Mouth. From the path a track descends through a wood to the coastguard station near the shingle. At eventide the white houses are overshadowed by the tall precipice called Dunscombe Cliff, 351 feet high. The cliffs hereabouts are

full of springs which, washing down the red and yellow soil, stain the pebbles with parti-coloured streaks. Between Weston Mouth and Branscombe, the next mouth, these springs have petrifying qualities. It is worth, I am told—I have never tried it—a scramble up the undercliff to obtain specimens of the fossilised vegetation. A friend of mine found a beautiful piece of bramble petrified most perfectly, even to the thorns. Specimens may be seen about the cottage doors at Branscombe, principally mosses. They are curious rather than beautiful, and, having in the process turned a greyish colour, bear some resemblance to that digestible but very unromantic comestible *tripe*!

It is three miles from Weston Mouth to Branscombe, and the walk after climbing the mountainous cliff slope that bounds Weston Mouth on the east is delightfully invigorating. The breeze, unchecked by tree, fence, or other obstacle, blows fresh in the face of the wayfarer, and crisps the surface of the great open bay with little foam-capped waves. When you pause, as you frequently will, to try to make out some shadowy headland half-way up the coast of Dorset, you will look down either a sheer precipice or a sloping wall of red, yellow, grey, and white, with a base of broken masses covered with vegetation often wild, but occasionally, as we noticed just now, sowed by the hand of man. After awhile the summits become less level and are crested—and this is especially noticeable from the sea—with what look like great earthworks, tumuli, and other fanciful shapes. Chalk, it is well known, does weather into many strange objects, but these, I fancy, are mostly due to man's agency, and are the refuse heaps of chalk pits which Time has covered with a carpet of green. Now and again you come upon a limekiln in picturesque decay.

Suddenly the wall opens, and we look down upon "one of the sweetest combes in Devon." It is one of three, all of which converge at a point about a mile up from the sea.

Each is green with meadow, shaded with foliage, and watered by its own brook. Straggling up the combe—in fact, scattered over all three valleys—is Branscombe. In one valley is the vicarage and an inn, in another the church, in the third the omnipresent chapel and some picturesque cottages, ending a good two miles from the shore with another inn which keeps the best cheese I have ever tasted. And all about the village rise steep green hills, the loftiest covered with trees, and reaching an elevation of some six hundred feet.

The population of Branscombe is, in common with that of all the other villages of this coast, mostly agricultural, though a little fishing may be done at times. But many of the women have other work than hoeing and such like employment. Branscombe turns out a good deal of Honiton lace, the greater part of which is made to the order of a local firm. At the great Exhibition of 1851 they exhibited a specimen of their handiwork worth, it is said, £3000. At every other cottage you will find a woman with a pillow in her lap, hard at work at the delicate fabric. And a much more pleasant occupation than labouring in the fields in wind and rain, laying in a store of "rheumatic" for their later years, poor things.

Descending the wooded side of Littlecombe Hill we reach the church, a very ancient building and in a state of repair that can only be called shocking. The floor is broken and uneven—so uneven that a short-sighted person might easily stumble, and the monuments in the chancel are positively running with green slime. The verger, a cobbler, who has a little wayside cottage hard by, shakes his head dolefully. "The architect says it will take £2600 to put 'un to rights, sir." Maybe; but it would not take 2600 pence, or even farthings, to make one or two eyesores disappear, and it reflects little credit on the people of Branscombe that they are content to leave their church in such a state.

And it is a building of which much might be made, for it is well proportioned, and its sturdy tower and thick walls show little sign of yielding to the hand of Time. In fact, the exterior deludes the visitor into expecting something better than the dingy horse-boxes and plentiful whitewash which he will find inside.

The shape is cruciform, the tower on rectangular piers rising from the centre, and appears to have been built in the twelfth century, or very early in the thirteenth, and would therefore be on the border-line between the late Norman and Early English styles of architecture. Most of the church evidently dates from the same period, for the corbels beneath the eaves of the roof run right round the building, and are all of like pattern. The window lighting the south transept, however, is Decorated, though the one opposite is Early English. The east window, again, which contains five lights and is divided by a transom, is Perpendicular. Even the tower has been interfered with, the round stair turret having been heightened by the addition of an octagonal top rising above the battlements. Altogether the church is rather a medley, and cries aloud for judicious restoration. But it will take a long time to collect the necessary sum in Branscombe.

There is quite an elaborate monument in the north transept. This is a tomb with a bas-relief containing no less than twenty-three kneeling figures. The two males are John Kellaway and John Wadham, husbands of Joan Tregarthin, who with her twenty children is represented behind her husbands. This prolific lady was the mother of Nicholas Wadham, the founder of Wadham College, Oxford. The Wadham family once possessed Edge, that house on the round hill to the north-west, the first owner being Sir John Wadham, who came into possession of the property in the time of Edward the Third. Sir Nicholas was the last Wadham who lived there. He died without issue, and Edge

fell to his sisters, who had married into the families of Wyndham and Strangways. Edge still retains traces of sixteenth-century architecture, and there are ruins of a domestic chapel.

Branscombe church is dedicated to St. Winfred and St. Branwallader. St. Winfred, the British name of good Bishop Boniface,\* himself a Devonshire man, is a very rare dedication—indeed, there is but one other, and that is at Manaton, on the borders of Dartmoor. His ecclesiastical name of Boniface appears at Bonchurch in the Isle of Wight, and at Bunbury in Cheshire. St. Branwallader is supposed to be the same as St. Brannock, to whom is dedicated the church of Braunton in North Devon, and Branscombe probably owes its name to this saint quite as much as Braunton does.

In the churchyard is an epitaph to one Joseph Braddick who died while working in the fields. It is very much to the point:

Strong and at labour  
Suddenly he reels  
Death came behind him  
And struck up his heels  
Such sudden strokes surviving mortals bid ye  
Stand on your watch and be ye also ready.

Near the south door lie the remains of "William Lee the father and Robert Lee the son both buried together in one grave October the 2: 1658." Their tomb bears these verses:

Reader aske not who lyes here  
Unlesse thou meanst to drop a tear  
Father and son Heere joyntly have  
One life one death one tombe one grave  
Impartiall hand that durst to slay  
The roote and branch both in one day  
Our comfort in there death is this  
That both are gone to joy and bliss.

\* He was born at Crediton about 680. Pope Gregory II. consecrated him Bishop of the German Churches, and Gregory III. made him Archbishop. While prosecuting his missionary work he was, with fifty followers, slain in Friesland in 755, and buried in the Abbey of Fulda.

The wine that in these earthen vessels lay  
The hand of death hath lately drawn away  
And as a present serv'd it up on high  
Whilst heere the vessells with the lees doe lye.

What odd conceits some of these old epitaphs have! On the other side of the door is what at first sight appears to be a huge block of stone. My cobbler, however, informed me that it was an overturned sarcophagus brought from a distance—I think he said Budleigh Salterton—of its history he was quite ignorant. There it lies in the same position, I suppose, as when first shot down. If sufficiently interesting to bring from such a distance, one would have thought that a little more care would have been taken with it. But Branscombe evidently cares for none of these things.

Its records must be interesting reading, too. Overlooking the church is an ancient house called the “clergy,” which still has an ecclesiastical window or two, and was, Murray says, “full of strange hiding places.” Whether there is anything in the local tradition that it is built on the top of another house (crypt?), I do not know. From its name it was evidently at one time devoted to pious uses, although to-day it is a cottage. Possibly it was a priest-house.

And on the same side of the road that winds up the valley, only much higher—in fact, in the uppermost hamlet—is another queer old house that has a history. On it is the date 1581, and, like the “clergy,” it is now turned into a cottage—or cottages. All the information possessed by the present tenants is that it was a “Roman Catholic place.” Truly a man with an antiquarian turn of mind, and with more leisure than the passing wayfarer, might do worse than amuse himself by collecting all that can be discovered about Branscombe.

The way onwards to Beer will take us by the road that winds along the sides of the hills down to the shore. It passes near an old farm, formerly, and perhaps still, known

as Seaside House. In bygone days this house, which dates from the seventeenth century, was the residence of the Michell family. There is a tradition that John Michell sheltered in a recess in the neighbouring cliffs a number of unfortunate persons informed against for having been seen among Monmouth's followers, yet wholly innocent of any overt act of rebellion.\* Here, like a seventeenth-century Obadiah, he hid and fed them, waiting till the vigorous search after rebels had somewhat abated. The Michells soon after removed to Slade, in the adjoining parish of Salcombe.

Leaving the coastguard station, we climb another tall cliff and soon find ourselves on South Down, with Beer Head just ahead and a broken mass of undercliff at our feet.

Beer Head rises 426 feet almost straight from the water, and is the most defined promontory between Berry Head and Portland. It is the most southerly outcrop of the chalk in England; in fact, the most westerly, too, as the traces in the cliffs towards Branscombe are really part of the same mass. With its white pinnacles and ivy-hung crags it is a beautiful object. Below it is eaten out into caverns, where the water is a ghastly green with the reflections of the overhanging crags of chalk. The lower rocks are dotted with black objects. If you approach you will find that they become instinct with life, and move their heads uneasily from side to side. They are cormorants, or "Beer Head fishermen" as the Sidmouth folk facetiously term them. And skilled fishermen they are, too. There is one even now gazing intently at the pale water as it sucks against the weed-covered sides of his rock. A splash, and he has disappeared. He is too far off for us to note the result of his sudden dive, but when he reappears a hundred yards out to sea his beak is high in the air, his head almost upon his shoulders. He is evidently swallowing *something*.

\* Rev. Edwd. Butcher's New Guide to Sidmouth, 1820.



The situation of Beer Head is such that it commands a greater extent of coast line than any promontory in Devonshire. You can see from Portland to the Start, a distance, following the coast line (most of which is visible), of at least a hundred miles, though from horn to horn in a direct line across the chord of the great arc of the West Bay it is not much more than fifty. To say more about the wonderful colouring would be mere repetition. But as you stand on this great white headland the contrast between the different tints is more marked than ever. You have the yellow cliffs of Dorset; the ochres and siennas of those about Axmouth; the white and grey of Beer; the red of Sidmouth and Dawlish; while the limestone of Berry Head has become a pale blue, and the grim rocks of the Start a line of softest grey.

A mile inside Beer Head is Beer Cove and the long village of Beer filling a narrow valley. We reach it after a roughish walk by footpath and lane, descending into the village not far from the spot where stands the large new church for which Beer people have to thank their landlord, the Hon. Mark Rolle. With the exception of one or two villas which have of late years been erected on the hillside above, it is about the newest thing in Beer. For Beer, though getting modern, is still an old-world village. And the people are old-world, too, despite the fact that Seaton railway station is but two miles away, and that cards announcing "Furnished Apartments" may be seen in some of the cottage windows. Shut out as they have been for centuries by the high hills inland, over which the roads have always been bad, and are none too good even to this day; with no town within many a mile—for Seaton is little more than a village; with no haven between Lyme and Exmouth, and with no trade save fishing and lace-making—neither of which brings them much into contact with the outside world—one feels little surprise that the people of

Beer are almost a race unto themselves. And they knew in days gone by how to take advantage of their isolation. Ask any ancient sailor about smuggling, and he will tell you of wild doings along this coast in old times, when Jack Rattenbury converted the caverns into vaults for French brandy, and defied every King's ship from the Wight to the Start. In stormy weather these daring rascals would lash the tubs together, thus forming a sort of breakwater round their boats. But all this is over now, and the coastguardman at the station upon South Down has, I imagine, little to do but gossip with anyone who fancies his company, and stare through his telescope at the craft passing in the offing.

It has often been remarked that the people of Beer have an appearance singularly foreign-looking. Dark hair and eyes and swarthy complexions are, indeed, no rarity—and that they have a strong strain of Spanish blood is an undoubted fact. This I discovered in the most unexpected manner. A summer or two ago I chanced to call at a country house. The door was opened by a man dark of hair, dark of eye, and dark of visage. With that sinking of the heart experienced, I believe, by nearly every Englishman when he attempts to speak the Gallic or any other tongue except his own, I prepared to deliver myself in such "French of Parys" (being ignorant of Spanish) as would come at short notice, but, to my surprise, this foreign-looking butler addressed me in excellent English. I had not committed myself, fortunately, and subsequently I asked him how he knew English so well. "I come from Beer, sir," he said, with a twinkle in his dark eyes. And then he told me why so many had mistaken his nationality. When Elizabeth's captains were pursuing the lumbering Armada up the Channel, one of the great galleons was cast ashore at Beer. The crew escaped, and the inhabitants, who, as likely as not, had the haziest notions of why beacons were blazing on all the headlands, and knew nothing of the Pope and King

Philip's designs, succoured the destitute Spaniards, who settled among them, married their maidens, and became naturalised men of Devon. This was the man's explanation. And his name was *Gibbs*! Shade of Medina Sidonia! Fancy the descendant of a Spaniard, however lowly, rejoicing in the unromantic name of Gibbs!

But I am bound to say that there is another version of my friend's story, not quite so interesting, perhaps, but, with all respect to him, honest fellow, more credible. Fifty years, or thereabouts, after the scattered remnants of the Armada reached the shores of Spain, the Plague broke out at Beer, and more than three-fourths of the inhabitants were swept away. Just then a Spanish vessel was wrecked in the cove, and the people, glad of anyone to cheer their desolation, permitted the sailors to instal themselves in the deserted houses. And this, according to a very general tradition, is the true reason why so many of the Beer folk "look like furriners."

In connection with this subject, a late vicar of Branscombe has contributed some interesting notes to the *Western Antiquary*.<sup>\*</sup> After alluding to the wreck of the Armada galleon, and to the "physical characteristics of some of the people," he states that the registers of Branscombe have "some remarkable foreign names, such as Meco and the well-known Spanish name Margal, which was of late years distinguished in the person of the Spanish Minister of State Señor Py y Margal," and that there is land at Branscombe known as "Margal's" to this day. He further tells us that in the winter of 1871 an old anchor was found in Beer Cove, which from its antique pattern was thought to have belonged to the Spanish warship. This anchor seems to have been sold as old iron, so whether it belonged to the Armada galleon or to the vessel wrecked later there is now no means of determining.

<sup>\*</sup> Vol. vii., p. 320. "Beer and the Armada."

Through the village runs a diminutive brook, which, after traversing its entire length, tumbles into the cove below. This brook is to the children a great delight. Of a summer evening they may be seen constructing miniature dams and floating miniature boats in the ponded water to their hearts' content. In days gone by I have seen their mothers sitting in the sunny doorways patiently working at their lace. For, a few years ago, Beer, even more than Branscombe, had—and, indeed, though in less degree, has still—a name for lace. But we no longer hear of such triumphs as those of the past, when the workers were honoured with Royal commissions, making not only that for the Queen's wedding dress—"which," they will proudly tell you, "cost a thousand pounds, every penny"—but also some of that used for the dresses of the Princess of Wales and the lamented Princess Alice.

And it seems that they made lace for the *Prince Consort* as well, though I was not before aware that he wore it either at his wedding or afterwards. While talking to a lady resident at Axmouth, she told me that she had been to see an old man whose wife, just recovering from illness, was piously reading a book of prayers, rather, she thought, as a "show off" before her. In the course of conversation she mentioned the Queen's wedding dress, part of which this old lady had done, whereupon the old fellow looked at her mysteriously, and, lowering his voice, said: "There, mum, I seed a thing then I never seed afore nor since. 'Twas a pair of *Honiton lace breeches* for Prince Albert, an' he wored 'em over blue satin!" Then, turning to his wife, he shouted: "D'ye mind them there breeches yer made for Mister—for Prince Albert?" The old woman, engaged in muttering her prayers, looked inexpressibly shocked, and replied: "I've better things to think on." "But yer mind it—yer've got the prickings upstairs—what part on 'em was it yer made?" With increased dignity she replied:

"I've better things to think on—I don't think on they things now," and returned to her prayers. And so we are left in doubt as to whether the Prince really did wear lace breeches over blue satin (blue satin *what?*) or no. If he did, we can quite believe that no one has ever "seed such a thing afore nor since."

There is at least one interesting building in Beer. This is a house built by John Starre, whose family were joint lords of the manor with the Walronds in the sixteenth century. On one of the chimneys may be seen his initials, J. S.; on another his canting crest, a *star*. In the baptistery of the church is a monument to a member of the family, removed from the old chapel, pulled down to make way for the church. It commemorates the Plague, though that word is oddly spelt. The inscription runs: "John the fifth son of William Starr of Bere gent: and Dorothy his wife which died in the *Plaue* was here buried 1646."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### OVER THE WHITE CLIFFS.

Beer Quarries—The Cove and the Capstan—The White Cliff—Seaton—Moridunum—Bovey House and its Ghost—A Blocked Haven—Battle of Brunanberg.

BEFORE we resume our march eastward we must pay a visit to the quarries. They are up the valley, to the right and left of the road, that on the right being in full work, while the other is abandoned and the great heaps of refuse covered with grass or undergrowth. Of the antiquity of these quarries there can be no question. Tradition says that they were worked by the Romans, and, though tradition occasionally lies, in the present instance it is likely to be true enough. Perhaps the Roman villa, traces of which were discovered near the earthwork known as Hannaditches, behind Seaton, may have been built with stone from these quarries.

At any rate, there is no doubt that Beer stone was used in the construction of the vaulted roof and parts of the arches of Exeter Cathedral, itself eight hundred years old; so Beer quarries are not exactly of yesterday. This ancient quarry is not an open excavation, but burrows into the hill for a great distance, the roof or roofs—for there are branch galleries—supported by rude pillars of the natural rock. So extensive are the workings, that they are said to go even beneath the sea, like Botallack Mine in Cornwall. It is scarcely a pleasant place to go astray in, and should

certainly not be explored without a competent guide. For myself, I was content to remain outside and learn how full of bats, how damp and dismal it all was—which same dampness, however, does not appear to have prevented its being used by Rattenbury and Co. as a warehouse for contraband.

“Beer stone,” as it is called, is excellent for building purposes. Lying at the junction of the chalk and greensand, it is principally composed of carbonate of lime, soft and easily cut, but hardening with exposure, owing to evaporation of the moisture with which it is charged. After a few years the creamy white weathers to a soft grey, which imparts an air of substantial comfort to the neighbouring cottages.

Retracing our steps down the village street, we turn to the left to the coastguard station, which commands a view of the cove with its rows of fishing boats, its groups of lounging fishermen—for the “shags” are not the only fishermen of Beer Head—and its great capstan, the present of Mr. Penry Williams, the artist, whereby the boats are drawn up the steep bank of pebbles. Fishing at Beer appears to be in a prosperous state. Years ago I can remember when the present capstan was sufficient for the boats employed, but this is no longer the case. “Us do want two or three more, sir,” said a son of Zebedee; “an’ there do be a meeting up to town to-night to talk it over.” We hope that the “talking it over” will be productive of something satisfactory.

“Once upon a time,” as the story books say, I suppose this capstan would not have been necessary. For there was then a pier; but the waves made short work of it. “Ther was begon,” says Leland, in his quaint fashion, “a fair pere for socour of shippelettes at this Bereword; but ther cam such a tempest a 3 years sins, as never in mynd of man had before bene seene in that shore,

and tare the pere in peaces." And you may still see its ruins.

What a pretty spot this cove is ! No wonder that Penry Williams was so fond of it. How blue the water looks against the gleaming flanks of Beer Head—how sleepily this hot day it laps, laps, laps against the sides of that picturesque boat that scarcely stirs in response ! A hundred yards from shore, "rocked in the cradle of the deep," doze a happy family of gulls. We envy those gulls as we face the chalky pathway that gives back a glare that is positively painful, and climb slowly beneath a white crag studded with round flints—where it is not green with ivy—to the down above. A board mounted on a post at the summit of the ascent warns us not to approach too near the edge of the cliffs. The warning is not unnecessary, as landslips are of frequent occurrence, and within my own memory tons of the stately "White Cliff," as it is called, have crashed to the beach below. And before many years have elapsed more will go. A few yards to the left of the path may be seen a long, deep fissure. Some day this will widen—probably with great suddenness—and the precipice topple forward *en masse*, and either lie on the foreshore a confused pile of ruin, or form an undercliff similar to the subsidence further east, though, of course, on a much smaller scale.

But as it stands at present the White Cliff well deserves its name, for it is almost snow white, and perpendicular as a wall. And a wall it very much resembles, being set here and there with regular courses of flints exactly like bands of masonry. It commands a grand view of Beer Head in one direction, and of the ochre cliffs about the mouth of the Axe in the other.

At the back of White Cliff sweeps the high road to Seaton. Presently, as we descend through a copse, we come in sight of it. But it looks hot and uninviting, so



we take the path to the right, which drops to the beach, along which, and at the very feet of the cliffs, runs a rough sort of promenade, a continuation of Seaton Esplanade. Where this promenade begins the white cliffs suddenly come to an end, and the red ones again crop out, mixed with a good deal of blue clay and marl. Turning as we gain the beach, we look up at the great wall of chalk above. It is well worth looking at, even in this land of gorgeous hues, for it has the loveliest tints of any cliff in Devon. Bars of purest white, yellow ochre, and pale blue alternate, any suspicion of hardness being at once banished by the green of the grasses and shrubs that fill the fissures and inequalities of its surface. When seen against a background of bright blue sky the effect is hardly English. It looks as if a bit of the Mediterranean coast had found its way to the misty shores of Albion.

The cliffs get lower and lower as we approach Seaton, and finally cease altogether as the end of the esplanade comes into view. It is a very humble esplanade, with little to separate it from the pebble ridge which stands the Seaton people in lieu of a beach. But about the middle the wall is higher than elsewhere, apparently to render more conspicuous the word MORIDUNUM, which, painted in gigantic letters, stares the people landing from the excursion steamer in the face, and at once puts them on inquiry as to its meaning. Its meaning is that Seaton wishes all and singular to know that it claims to be the "only and original" *Moridunum* of Antoninus, and that such places as Hembury and High Peak have no right to any pretensions whatever.

The claims of Seaton seem to rest upon certain earth-works that once existed at Hannaditches\* (*vulgo*,

\* But this may be *Danish*, the work of Hanna, who is said, traditionally, to have been a powerful Danish prince—perhaps the leader of the expedition that landed at the mouth of the Axe. (See *infra*, and Mr. P. O. Hutchinson's paper at p. 277, Trans. Dev. Assoc., vol. xvii.)

Honeyditches) and on the lofty hill of Hocksdown across the Axe, upon a bit of so-called Roman road at the base of the latter hill, and on the Roman villa discovered half a mile north of Honeyditches, of which little or no remains now exist. The Roman road certainly points seaward, and *may* have branched from the Ikenild Way at Axminster, some six miles up the valley of the Axe. But what about the distances? The "Itinerary" gives Moridunum as thirty-six miles from Dorchester (Durnovaria) and fifteen from Exeter.

Now, thirty-six Roman miles are equal to forty and a half English ones, and Seaton is less than thirty. Hembury Fort, on the other hand, is forty and a half miles exactly,\* and High Peak much the same distance, and both about six miles (Hembury is slightly the nearer) north and south respectively of a branch of the Ikenild Way passing through Ottery St. Mary. The camp of Hembury Hill is a fine specimen, and in it have been discovered Roman coins and a "lar" or household god of iron. It is without doubt the most favoured of the three by modern antiquaries. At any rate, it has a far better title to the name of Moridunum than Seaton, and perhaps High Peak comes next. But I am gradually wandering into matters antiquarian—to many "dry as dust." So we will leave this discussion of the site of Moridunum and turn our steps towards the modern town winding up the slope that looks down upon the marshy meadows of the Axe.

It always seems to me that Seaton must have been a country town first and a watering place afterwards. Even along the sea front there is little suggestion of a watering place—few of those palatial edifices of brick and stone and plate glass wherein the modern watering place doth rejoice.

\* I take this measurement from Stirling's "Beauties of the Shore." He follows Sir R. C. Hoare's computation.

And when you get into the narrow streets you might be a score of miles from the ocean for all suggestion there is of it. Quite a rustic air broods over Seaton. It looks as if it had originated somewhere about the middle of the county and been thence removed bodily to the shores of the English Channel.

It is not more than half the size of Sidmouth, and has far less the appearance of a town than its more fashionable neighbour. Indeed, when you get beyond the shops in the principal street it is as much village as town—a pleasant retired spot where those who want a maximum of quiet with a minimum of “life” will do well to pitch their tents. Once outside the streets there are peaceful views of the Axe Valley with red Devon cattle grazing on the rich herbage, of Hocksdown towering high above the grey tower of Axmouth Church, and of low wooded hills and sunny slopes stretching away towards Colyford. And in the opposite direction, looking away from this rural picture, you have a stretch of blue sea framed in, as it were, by the White Cliff on the one hand, and the ochre precipice of Haven Cliff, overlooking the mouth of the Axe, on the other.

The church stands at the very head of the town—indeed, quite in the country. It appears to have a little of every kind of architecture from Transition-Norman to debased Perpendicular, but none of it is striking, and the building, as a whole, has not been improved by modern innovation. The principal monuments are to the Walronds, an old Devonshire family who formerly resided at Bovey House, an interesting Elizabethan mansion about two miles inland at the back of Beer village. The estate came to the Walronds about the end of the thirteenth century, and was held by them till 1778, when, a Walrond heiress marrying Lord Rolle, Bovey passed to that family. Over the vestry door of Seaton Church is a tablet containing a quaint

epitaph by one of the Walrond ladies to her husband—in capitals :

Here lieth the body of my husband deare  
Whom next to God I did both love and feare  
Our loves were single we never had but one  
And so Ile bee allthough that thou art gone  
And you that shall this sad inscriptiō view  
Remember it allwaies that deaths your due.

Bovey House has a secret chamber in the roof. It is also haunted. The "rights of the story" it is difficult to get at, but the ghost appears to be a headless lady, who walks the house in a blue silk dress. Who she is, and why she has no head, no one seems to know. The blue silk is, it would seem, part of every respectable ghost's wardrobe. Occasionally they are seen in grey; but whoever heard of a well-regulated spectre in green or brown or black?

Whether a Roman settlement or not, Seaton is without doubt a very old town. It is mentioned in Domesday Book as Suetetone, and, with Axmouth, was once a place of some trade, with a haven, now choked by the pebble bank. It provided two ships for the siege of Calais in 1347, and on September 21, 1450, Bishop Lacy (of Exeter) granted an indulgence to those who would contribute towards the repair of the haven.\* Either the "true penitents" did not come forward in sufficient numbers, or the sea was too much for them, for soon after the pebble ridge filled it up, and the Axe was driven eastward to Haven Cliff, where, according to Leland, it entered the sea by "a very smaul gut," precisely as it does to-day. In Leland's day—the middle of the sixteenth century—the haven was only a refuge for fishing boats, though not long before his time the "gut" must have been much wider, for remains of shipping and anchors have been found far up the river, and in 1837 Mr. Stirling mentions the discovery of a vessel of about 70 tons burthen near the fording place, "which in all

\* Stirling, p. 9.

probability had remained in that situation for upwards of three centuries." It is probable, therefore—indeed certain—that the marshy meadows across which to-day runs the railway were once part of the estuary of the Axe, and that the Seaton of the Middle Ages was, commercially, of far greater importance than the Seaton of to-day.

But there is still a chance of its regaining some of—possibly much more than—its original importance. More than once has a scheme been discussed for making a ship canal between it and some point on the Bristol Channel, thus saving the long, and often stormy, route round Land's End. If this canal ever becomes *un fait accompli*—which at present seems doubtful—Seaton must benefit appreciably, and Axmouth, now a quiet village of thatched cottages, may once more have the *fourteen hotels* (!) that are assigned to it by tradition.

The history of Seaton is uneventful. Like most of the other towns on this seaboard, it suffered from the descents of the Danes, and here landed in 937 certain Danish princes, perhaps those whom Athelstan defeated at Brunanberg (or, as the Chronicler calls it, Brumby), which, according to some antiquaries, was at or near Axminster—anciently called Branburg. Others, however, place the scene of the battle in Lincolnshire, and there are certain lines in the saga into which the Chronicler bursts over this victory which are, to my mind, rather against the arguments of those who place the scene of Athelstan's victory by the banks of the Axe. Says the Sagaman :

*Mercians* refused not  
the hard hand play  
to any heroes  
who with Aulaf  
over the ocean  
in the ship's bosom  
this land sought  
fated to the fight.

And again, after triumphantly telling how “ five youthful kings ” and “ seven eke of Anlaf’s earls ” were

by swords in slumber laid,  
he narrates how

the brothers  
both together  
King and etheling  
their country sought  
*West-Saxons’ land.*

Now, what had the men of Mercia to do with Wessex?  
And why, if Athelstan and Edmund the Etheling were  
*already* in Wessex, did they seek “ West-Saxons’ land ”?

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THROUGH THE LANDSLIP.

Mouth of the Axe—The Concrete Bridge—Haven Cliff—Culverhole Point—The Landslip—A Great Subsidence—Rowsedon—A Rough Undercliff—The County Boundary—Lyme Regis.

A WALK of less than a mile brings us to where the Axe, pent up by the pebble ridge, swirls angrily to the sea. Across the narrow mouth, right under Haven Cliff, stands the Custom House and a crumbling quay—remains of the last attempt to reopen the old haven. Half a century ago the little harbour, which owed its construction to the enterprise of John Hallett of Stedcombe, the lord of the manor, was quite a busy spot. Vessels of 150 tons could berth there, and timber yards and coal sheds stood on both sides of the river. But the sea was always troublesome; sometimes vessels could not get into the river at all, and the pebbles silted up more and more till the outlet became as it is now—only about ten yards wide. Then came the railway; the people of Colyton and Seaton could get their goods with greater certainty, and the harbour began to empty. Now it is deserted altogether; the sheds have disappeared, the yards are desolate, and when I last saw the Custom House it was fast lapsing into ruin. I hear, however, that within the last few months it has been “restored,” and now forms a sort of sea-house, or summer-house, for the present owner of Stedcombe.

A quarter of a mile from its mouth the Axe is spanned by a bridge of concrete, built a few years since as a substitute—a very necessary one—for the ferry boat which carried passengers across a few yards below. Near this ferry was the site of the old “haven” of Seaton, and some rough stones still mark the spot where the last effort was made to restore it. The story is told by Tristram Risdon. “It appeareth,” he says, “that in this place divers works have been attempted for the repairing of the old decayed haven, but of late years with better success than formerly by T. Erle, Esq<sup>r</sup>, lord of the land; who, when he had brought the same to some likelihood, was taken away by death, leaving his labours to the unruly ocean, which, together with unkind neighbours (by carrying away the stones of that work), made a great ruin of his attempt. But the now lord thereof, his son, hath not only repaired the first ruins, but proceedeth on with purpose to bring to pass that which before him his father intended, as well for the general good of the kingdom, as particularly for these parts.” This was written in 1630, and only ten years later we read in Sir William Pole’s “Description of Devonshire,” that “it appears by old works and piles that there hath been a haven which Thomas Erle, Esq<sup>r</sup>, and Sir Walter his son, attempted to renew, but, after much expense, they were obliged to abandon the undertaking.” Only ten years, and already sea and river had made such havoc that it only “*appeared*” to have been a haven! I am afraid that unless the ship canal comes Seaton and Axmouth will never more see vessels in their river.

The concrete bridge—quite a curiosity in its way—carries the road to Axmouth and Lyme Regis. Axmouth, a mile up the river, we have visited on a previous occasion.\* In the wall of the church is a copper bolt, the mark of one of the stations of the survey made in 1837 by the British Associa-

\* See “The Rivers of Devon.”



tion to determine the difference of level between the Bristol and the English Channels, and with the further object of establishing a fixed mark by which any subsequent deviation or depression might be detected. "The line was from Bridgewater, up the Parret, to Ilminster, Chard, Axminster, and Axmouth. There are similar bolts at Wick Rocks near Bridgewater, at East Quantoxhead, and in the wall of Uphill Church near Weston-super-Mare, and in the whole number future geologists will have data for solving one of the most interesting problems their science affords."\* This was the line—or nearly so—adopted by Telford in 1825, when the survey was made for the ship canal. The highest point is near Chard, 280 feet above the level of the sea.

From Haven Cliff to Culverhole Point the ochre and white coast line is broken and irregular, and exhibits traces of subsidence. These traces, however, scarcely prepare us for what is coming. For we are approaching the Landslip—that wonderful undercliff (if so it may be called) which looks more like the results of an earthquake than of an ordinary subsidence.

I have referred to the landslip at White Cliff. This is a small affair when compared to the mass of ruin that stretches eastward of Culverhole Point. But the process is the same. There is a fissure in the chalk down; that fissure widens, rain soaks in, and frost helps rain. Or springs wash out the sand on which the cliffs stand, and the huge mass begins to quake. By-and-bye the people of adjacent farms hear a rumble, a roar, a crash as loud as that of an Alpine avalanche. Time and the elements have done their work—the cliff has gone.

From Culverhole Point all the way to Pinney does this landslip extend, but the most remarkable effect of the disturbance is seen below the farms of Bindon and Dowland. Here is the story:

\* Walter White's "A Londoner's Walk to the Land's End."

Shortly before Christmas, 1839, some cottages not far from Dowlands Cliff began to subside, doors jammed, and plaster cracked. The morning of Christmas Eve dawned, and the rustics awoke to find that their pathway had sunk seven feet, and that their gardens were full of chasms and crevasses. During the night the ground began to tremble as though an earthquake were impending, strange noises issued from the bowels of the earth, the land rocked and heaved, and a few of the coastguard passing the spot saw to their amazement the fields and pastures with which they had long been familiar sinking down, at times with a sudden dip, then slowly ; here portions dropping through all at once, there others protruding upwards. Loud sounds "like the rending of cloth," the poor people fled in terror.

They were just in time. At daybreak it was found that the cliff had been torn away—and there lay a chasm three-quarters of a mile long, two hundred and fifty feet in width, and one hundred and fifty in depth, while a *mêlée* of

Craggs, knolls, and mounds confusedly hurled,  
The fragments of an earlier world,

lay piled in the wildest fashion along the undercliff and shore. Nor was this all. Almost simultaneously a ridge a mile long and more than forty feet high burst up through the sea parallel with the coast.\*

As Dr. Buckland well said, this convulsion in the grandeur of its disturbances far exceeds the ravages of the earthquakes of Calabria and almost the vast volcanic fissures of the Val de Bove on the flanks of the Etna." It seems wonderful that there was no loss of life, though it is said that a shooting party narrowly escaped being engulfed in a crevasse which opened at their very feet. Strange to say, two cottages and an orchard descended comparatively

\* "Seaton, Beer, and Neighbourhood." By G. Mumford.

uninjured—one of the cottages had to be demolished, however, and the other has been rebuilt. The orchard flourishes as well as ever. And the once barren scene of wreckage is now a veritable wild garden. Up the crags and pinnacles climb honeysuckle and convolvulus, from gleaming scaurs ivy waves in the breeze, while in spring the ground is a mass of primrose and hyacinth.

It must not be imagined that all the confused mass below the fields was caused by this particular subsidence. The part bordering the shore was undercliff long before, and has no more connection with this great convulsion than has the undercliff below the farms of Whitlands and Pinney further east, though the whole slope is commonly called "The Landslip." Anyone who will take the trouble to scramble down the path to this undercliff will, I think, see at once that the subsidences are of different dates, and that the later one has fallen, as it were, upon the former. The ridge that rose in the sea, and the various "havens" formed along the shore—all of which have now vanished—were probably formed by portions of this undercliff thrust outwards by the tremendous pressure.

The best view of the great chasm is from the ground above what we must now, I suppose, call the cliffs. You look down upon an immense horseshoe, of which the landward side is an abrupt precipice of chalk, particoloured sandstone, and clay, but the chalk predominating; the seaward, broken and contorted masses of greensward (once pasture land from above) tilted up at a sharp angle, gigantic waves of chalk, the concavities white, the slopes brightest green. As we walk along the edge of the cliff we shall notice here and there in the ravine isolated white pinnacles, some capped with lumps of flint and gravel, others still retaining the turf of the field of which they once formed part. These are particularly noticeable at the western end. The effect from the undercliff below is very fine. "The

finest part," writes a sometime correspondent,\* "is just west of the west end of the ravine. There from below it is easy to fancy oneself gazing at some huge ivy-mantled castle. We seem to occupy the outside of the deep moat, neglected and well nigh filled by a tangled growth of underwood and creepers. Across it rises a many-bastioned wall, festooned and almost hidden in ivy. Along the top of that we see the main platform, whence tower, stern and abrupt, the walls of the fortress."

The subsidence seems to have had little effect upon the crops, with which at the time the land was, of course, full. As a rule, the land broke away in such great pieces that most of them could be gathered, and I am told that in the following autumn the harvest was plentiful, albeit sometimes three or four hundred feet away from where it was sown. And the lads and lasses made quite a gala day of it. Reaping under such circumstances was a decided novelty, and they turned out from all the countryside arrayed in white attire, the ladies being further adorned with blue ribbons. Were it not that tillage would destroy most of its picturesqueness, it seems almost a pity that the Landslip should lie uncultivated. A spot more sheltered or more sunny it would be difficult to find—and what a place for strawberries! But I suppose the expense of cultivating these ridges would far exceed the value of any produce derived from them. At any rate, the Landslip is practically deserted except by the "feeble folk," which inhabit it in tens of thousands.

As we reach the end of the chasm the mansion of Rowsdon appears half a mile inland. Rowsdon was built by Sir Henry Peek, who also erected the pretty church of St. Pancras close at hand. This was built on the site of an ancient church, which, except for burial purposes, had been unused for a century or more. Fifty-five years ago it is

\* Mr. C. S. Ward, M.A., in "South Devon and South Cornwall."

described as a "small *thatched* edifice without pews and with only one window." Rowsedon was then and is still, with the exception of Haccombe near Teignmouth,\* the smallest parish in England, and the population was only fourteen. The only houses now are Sir Henry Peek's mansion and the buildings connected with it and Dowlands Farm, through which those coming from the Landslip must pass if they wish to see the house or church. A feature of the former is the hall, which has some fine windows illustrating events in the history of Lyme Regis.

As the Landslip below Rowsedon is private property, I believe that the correct course is to pass up the lane to Dowlands and into the road to Lyme. Ignorant, however, that we were trespassing, we elected to further explore the broken slopes, and with some difficulty managed to climb down the cliff at the side of the hanging wood which covers the declivity immediately beneath the plantations of Rowsedon. The trees, which are principally ash, descended bodily from the upper regions, and, although many were, of course, killed, the majority survive and take to their new quarters kindly. From the narrow path that winds through this woodland may be seen on the one hand, and far below, the glittering waters of the Channel; on the other, the interlacing branches scarcely conceal the pinnacles of chalk. It is a study in blue, green, and white.

Emerging from the wood and passing at the back of a lodge surrounded by gardens where tall shafts of pampas grass and valuable shrubs look strange in this wilderness, we reach the new drive leading down to the shore. The cuttings disclose strata of blue clay, and the land is so charged with moisture, springs breaking forth everywhere, that the principal cause of the subsidence is at once apparent. At this point the glories of the Landslip may be

\* Devonshire, therefore, has the largest and smallest parishes in England, the largest being that of Lydford, which embraces Dartmoor Forest.

said to end. We are now close to the beach, and for the next mile have a very rough experience indeed. A track which begins in a weak-minded sort of way presently ceases altogether, and the walk becomes literally a pilgrimage over an uneven slope made up of chalk, clay, and flints. Even here, however, vegetation keeps a footing, and, though blasted shrubs may be counted by the score, there is a flourishing growth of bramble which at the proper season bear, as I can myself testify, a splendid crop of blackberries. Away against the sky line tower the cliffs of Whitlands and Pinney, and before we reach a path again we begin to wish we were on their breezy summits. Toil, however, comes at length to an end, and we scramble across a weed-grown watercourse and up to a path on the verge of a dense wood that comes to the very edge of a lower line of cliffs. Here or hereabouts the chalk comes to an end, and, looking towards Lyme, we see a long grey wall of the Rhætic formation as regular as the wall of masonry which it so much resembles.

For the last day or two the cliffs of Dorset have been drawing nearer and more near, and we feel that our journey is approaching its termination. Up to the very last the scenery is passing fair. Our path takes us through another undercliff, this time of green undulating glades, and, passing out into the open fields, we reach the county boundary and look down upon the picturesque little seaport of Lyme, with its long stone Cobb or pier stretching a grey arm into the blue sea. Eastward the coast stretches away in tints of yellow and ochre and sienna, past lofty Golden Cap—that flattened cone rising 615 feet sheer from the beach—past Eype Down and Bridport Harbour, past the precipices of Burton Bradstock, past the low green shores of Abbotsbury, to Chesil Beach and the stony Isle of Portland. Very different is the scene to that where our journey commenced. Except the ever-present sea,

there is nothing in common between these brilliant cliffs of the West Bay and the stern screes of the Foreland, the wooded cliffs of Glenthorne, and the purple undulations of Exmoor. But whether we gaze

O'er yon black rock whose frowning bastion braves  
And breaks the onset of the wintry waves,

or stand where

The red cliffs dip their feet and dally  
With the billows green and cool,

we must, if we have any soul at all, confess to the beauty of these Devonshire coasts. Where but in this dear old western county shall we find such contrasts—where such matchless colouring?

FINIS.





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